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AN EPITOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF RELIGION AS FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES AND IN THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH, TOGETHER WITH THE ARGUMENTS FROM HUMAN REASON

A TEXTBOOK FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

BY

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TO

FATHER FRANCIS XAVIER DOYLE, S.J.,

WHO PLANNED AND BEGAN THIS SERIES
AND GAVE THERETO HIS TALENTS, HIS
ENERGY, AND THEN HIS LIFE.

PREFACE

This volume is the second of the series of College Apologetics begun by the late Father Francis Doyle, S.J.

While I inscribe this volume with the same commendation which I gave to its predecessor, I would add that a very subtle and difficult part of the field of Theology is herein covered, and covered with lucidity and due deference to lay intelligence.

I would draw attention to the analytic contents as well as to the marginal titles which are of distinct text-book value.

My God-speed goes with these pages and the hope that they will reach the hands not only of the Catholic student body but also of earnest inquirers within and without the Church.

August 22, 1928

LAWRENCE J. KELLY, S.J.
Provincial of the Maryland-New York Province of the Society of Jesus.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

This volume is the second in the TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY SERIES. Its purpose, as already announced, is to provide a textbook for the subject of Evidences of Religion which forms part of the curriculum of all Catholic Colleges.

It claims to be no more than a translation, or perhaps better, a compendious paraphrase of the following treatises of theology: Faith, The Unity and Trinity of God, God the Creator, Angels and The Last Things. The Latin texts which I have followed are, in the order named, those of Fathers Lutz and Casten of the Society of Jesus, both of whom I remember as their devoted pupil. The book which I think I have used most frequently is the *Institutiones Dogmaticæ* of Father Otten, S.J. of St. Louis.

The method followed is the approved apologetic one, the proofs and discussions proceeding first from the authority of the Councils, the Fathers and the Scripture, and then giving the argument from reason. This order does not appear so much in the beginning when the nature of the different sources has to be defined. There is also an exception in the chapter on the existence of God which is, of course, fundamental to all revelation and depends mainly on the support of reason.

The energy and originality of the individual teacher must, as ever, be relied on to make the subject live and last with the learners. For these two qualities the finest text in the world is no more than a weak and bloodless substitute. I would recommend, though, that the pupils be given some exercise in committing to memory the more important quotations from Scripture as well as the more sublime utterances of the Councils and the Fathers. Such things are a treasure for a life-time.

The matter treated is the common possession of Catholic teachers and taught. Its exact integrity is secure against either increase or revision.

THOMAS B. CHETWOOD, S.J.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY,
WASHINGTON, D. C.
April 15, 1928

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND OBLIGATION OF FAITH

We have seen in the preceding volume * that God has sent a message or revelation to all mankind and that He has, moreover, set up a Church which is to keep this message and teach it to mankind until the end of the world. We also saw that the Catholic Church is the one and only church which is God's teacher. No one could for a moment deny that, if this much is granted, it is every man's duty to receive God's message from His accredited teacher. Now the fundamental act by which we receive God's message (or, indeed, any bit of information from another) is called *faith*. Let us begin, then, by a discussion of what is meant by faith.

What is presupposed?

Faith, or, as it is commonly called, belief, is an assent on testimony. That is to say, it is the accepting a statement as true because someone tells me so. It must be clear at once that if I assent to a statement because I *see* that it is evident or that it cannot be otherwise, I am not doing any believing at all. If a friend who is visiting me in my room and is standing at the window says to me, "There is a piece of gold out there on the lawn," and I rush to the window and verify his words, I cannot say, "I believe it now"; for I have precisely not believed. I have assented only on the evidence of my sight. If, however, I accept my friend's assurance and, though his report is most unusual, I refuse to doubt his word, then I am making an act of faith in him as well as in the fact reported.

Faith

There are two elements in an act of faith which must be clearly considered; one is the intellect or the seeing faculty; the other is the will or the choosing faculty. In the first place the intellect is present. For in the assent of faith I affirm

Two elements in faith

* *The Defense of the Catholic Church*, by F. X. Doyle, S. J.

the truth of the proposition to which I adhere, whether it be that John Smith has just died in a distant city or that some principle in mathematics is true for which I have only the word of my teacher. And every assent to truth belongs properly to the intellect or understanding. Again, I must see that the thing to be believed is credible, is not offensive to my reason and that the one who tells me is reliable. Not even a child could be brought to believe a piece of evident nonsense nor to put faith in the word of a person who is always making sport of people with his lies. And this power of seeing and examining belongs also to the understanding.

Intellect

In the second place the will is present in faith for the simple reason that I do not have to believe if I do not choose to. I can say to the one who tells me that John Smith is dead, "I will not believe until I see," which is only another way of saying that I will not *believe* it at all; and I can say the same thing to my teacher when he assures me of something of which I do not perceive the proof. It is well to draw attention here to the folly of a man who would go through life believing nothing. If he consistently followed such a course he would soon become a laughing-stock to his friends and in the end a burden to himself and an outcast from human society. Try it some time for half a day. Resolve to believe nothing but only to accept a thing as true as far as the evidence warrants. The chances are you will have to give up the attempt.

Will

Folly of incredulousness

It is the leaving out of one of these elements of faith or failing to put them in in their proper degree that gives a decidedly wrong idea of faith. To believe everything that is told us with little or no exercise of our understanding or judgment is what is called credulity. This is an unreasonable weakness and not properly faith at all.

Credulity

Again, there is something which some people, and good people too, call faith which is nothing but an emotional impulse or thrill with nothing of reason or understanding in it. I remember once a good old gentleman, I think he was a Baptist, describing to me how "faith" came to him on the

Blind emotion

occasion of his Baptism. "They put me under the water twice," he said, "and nothing came to me, not a thing. But the third time" (his face lighted up as he spoke) "faith came to me. I could *feel* it all through me." On the other hand if there is no element of the will in my assent to something, this is not faith either. It is simply the exercise of my faculty of seeing. It is a necessary action or one that I cannot help making provided, of course, that the object seen is thrust upon my notice. It is an action for which I can neither be praised or blamed for the simple reason that it is not *free*.

Assent on evidence

All that we have said up to now applies to faith in general or to any free assent on authority, whoever the witness may be. But now we come to a particular kind of faith which is called supernatural faith. This is an assent on divine testimony; that is, when the witness to the truth is God Himself. All that we have said of faith in general is true of this kind of faith. It is a reasonable act; for if it is reasonable to take the word of a reliable human witness, it is much more so to take the word of Him Who is all Truth in Himself. Again, the act of supernatural faith is free. God does not force anyone in this life to accept His word or His message. The whole story of Our Lord's coming to earth and preaching to men is a terrible confirmation of this last statement. He preached, He pleaded, He worked miracles; but many that heard and saw Him would not believe.

Supernatural faith

There is a last word to be said here to remove the possible impression that supernatural faith does not give us certainty but only a probability which the will piously embraces and makes to do the part of certainty. This is far from true. The certainty of faith, on account of the dignity of its motive which is the testimony of God Himself, is the highest possible certainty. It is true, however, that this certainty of the motive of faith does not force the intellect. But the command of the will is necessary in order that the intellect may act on this motive and on this alone.

The certainty of Supernatural faith

Now the whole discussion of faith passes into the super-

natural order or into the order of those things which God has revealed. Has God revealed what He means by faith? Yes, He has. The word is found on the lips of Prophets and Apostles as meaning the belief in God's message on God's authority alone. But perhaps the most striking and clear definition of faith is given by Saint Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. XI, 1). "Now faith," he says, "is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not." Consider these words a moment. Faith is "the substance of things to be hoped for" because by faith we possess, in a true sense, God Who is the sum and substance of all those things for which we hope. Faith is the "evidence of things that appear not," because by faith we seize with our mind those things which, in this life, the mind cannot see. This meaning of faith (i.e., assent to a truth on God's authority pronounced by the mind but dictated by the will) is sanctioned by the universal usage of the Church. It is expressly taught in the Vatican Council which was the last of the Ecumenical or Universal Councils which, like all the others, emphasizes and makes clearer the teaching of the Catholic Church from the beginning. For the Council says (Session III, Chapter 3):

Faith defined in Scripture

"... we are bound to render by *faith* the full homage of *intellect* and *will* to God upon His making to us a revelation. Moreover the Catholic Church declares that this faith which is the beginning of human salvation is a supernatural virtue by which, God's grace inspiring and aiding, we believe the things revealed by Him to be true, not on account of their intrinsic truth seen by the natural light of reason but on account of the authority of God Himself Who reveals."

Faith defined by the Vatican Council

And further in Canon V:

"If anyone shall say that the assent of Christian faith is not free but is produced necessarily by the arguments of human reason, let him be anathema." (This last expression is used to designate anyone who rejects any part of the message of Christ.)

But the most important thing which God through His revela-

tion teaches us about this supernatural faith is that it is absolutely necessary for salvation. There can be no doubt whatever about this. Our Lord Who was usually so gentle in His speech used terrible words when He said, "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark XVI, 16). And Saint Paul pronounced the same truth in the words, "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. XI, 6).

Faith necessary for salvation

The Church of Christ has always taught the same from the beginning and in the Council of Trent she is most explicit upon it. The Council says, (Sess. 6, Ch. 6):

"And so men are disposed to justice itself" (i.e., to a state of grace) "when, urged and aided by divine grace and conceiving faith by hearing, they are freely moved towards God, believing those things to be true which have been revealed and promised."

Council of Trent

And again (Ch. 8):

"For when the apostle says that man is justified by faith, and so (justified) by God's free gift, the words are to be understood in that sense which the constant consent of the Catholic Church has held and set forth, namely that we are said to be justified by faith on this account because faith is the beginning of man's salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God and to join the company of His children."

At first sight this doctrine might seem capable of a mild interpretation. We might say that it is quite clear that if a man were aware that God had sent him a message and he deliberately refused to receive it, this man would surely not merit salvation. But, on the other hand there may be many men who are not aware of any message from God to them. They either live far away from civilization and have never heard the Gospel preached or living in the midst of civilization they have simply never thought of such a thing as a message from God. Such men, we might say, are not obliged to make an act of faith in order to be saved.

Is there any exception to the necessity of faith?

But this is not the teaching of Christ and His Church. Our

Lord does not say, "He that believeth not, if he hath chanced to hear my message, shall be condemned." And Saint Paul does not say, "Without faith it is impossible to please God, unless a man has not received any message from God." Finally the Church teaches expressly that faith is "the foundation and root of *all* justification" without exception. It follows then that all men must believe or fail in their salvation. But does it not follow, also, that all men must receive some message from God since they are all bound to believe? Yes, this does follow and we shall see in the next chapter what is the minimum of truth that an act of faith can contain. But the question to be particularly stressed here is the following:

No exception

How is a man who has not had the benefit of a religious education, who has been brought up to think that all religion is a fraud, that there is a God but all that we can learn about Him is from nature around us and from our own common sense within us, how is such a man to come to the knowledge of the message of Christ? The answer is that the ordinary way (we do not deal with the unusual ways that God may take) is by hearing from his fellow men who have received and listened to the message of Christ. And, note well, that it may often be the word of a companion, not of a priest or a preacher, that starts him on the way to an act of faith. Although this case is particular, being the case of an infidel, it applies to by far the majority of the acts of faith made by men. For it is God's plan that men are to receive His message not from Him directly but from the testimony of their fellow men. We shall consider further on how we are to discern the authority for this solemn testimony.

How does revelation reach men?

It may be asked why God has demanded faith of every man as a condition of his eternal salvation. Is it not true that He could have acted otherwise? Yes, it is true. He could, for instance, have made it a rule that only those men and women were obliged to believe who had been born and educated in the Church or who had had forced on their consideration the claims of the Church and the facts of His message; and that

Faith is part of God's arbitrary plan

the rest of mankind would only be obliged to use the natural light of their reason and live according to it with the aid of whatever help God should send them. Or He could have made His revelation so plain that no one could resist the evidence of it, so that belief would not be free but forced like that of the demons who, as Saint James says, "believe and tremble" (Jas. II, 19). (This last would not be any kind of faith according to our definition of it.)

The first answer to this question is that it does not need an answer. It is like seeking to know why God made this particular world and no other or why He made me and not another man in my place. God so willed and that is enough. Still, even with our limited vision we can see the wisdom of the present plan of God. It is found in those words of the Vatican Council, "the full homage of intellect and will" which we render to God by an act of faith. The highest part of man, the soul, which can never die, expresses itself by the two faculties of seeing and choosing. How reasonable it is that they should both at once render their homage to the God Who made us. It is true that this is not to last always. The time will come when there will be no more faith. Then we shall see God, as Saint Paul says, not as we do now, "in a glass darkly, but face to face" (I Cor. XIII, 12). Then we shall *know* Him and all His message without faith. But here is the place and now is the time for faith.

Wisdom of the plan

The faith which we have been considering is an act which, since it is supernatural, requires the grace of God every time we perform it. But besides the act of faith there is also the virtue or habit of faith. This habit is infused by God into the soul with the coming of sanctifying grace and its presence makes the performing of acts of faith *natural* to us, as it were, or, according to something with which our nature is then furnished.

The habit of faith

But the important point about the virtue or habit of faith is precisely this, *it can be lost*. It is not always lost by mortal sin. The Council of Trent is very plain on this point and

Loss of faith

indeed we know by experience that poor sinners often have a very active faith. But the habit of sin weakens the guards of faith and brings us nearer to the time when we fall into the sin of infidelity or denial of our faith. The habitual and wanton indulgence in sins against holy purity is especially likely to bring on the spiritual blindness which is a prelude to the loss of faith. It is an awful thing to hear a dying man say when he is urged by the priest to return to the practice of his religion, "Father, I used to believe all those things, but I can't now. I simply can't." That man's faith is dead. And it is well to remember that faith does not die suddenly. It first becomes sick and weak from want of nourishment by prayer and the Sacraments. Holy Communion is, of course, by far the most perfect food for our faith.

Finally, the reading of forbidden books is a deliberate tampering with our faith and is often responsible for the ultimate loss of faith.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is faith?
2. What are the two elements in faith?
3. What is credulity?
4. How does an assent on evidence differ from faith?
5. Give St. Paul's definition of faith.
6. Give difference between natural and supernatural faith.
7. Give the Vatican Council's definition of faith.
8. Prove that faith is necessary for salvation.
9. Why can there be no faith without revelation?
10. How is faith lost?

CHAPTER II

THE RULE OF FAITH

Rule of faith

The next thing to be considered is the rule of faith or how precisely we are to know what we must believe. The answer seems to have been given in the previous volume. We may well reply that we know what we are to believe from the Catholic Church which has been proved to be God's accredited teacher and the sole keeper of the message of Christ.

Faith without an official teacher

But this does not fully answer the question. It may well be asked how one may believe before he has come to the knowledge of the existence of the Church. Cannot a little child at its mother's knee make an act of faith in God and His goodness and in the death of Our Lord on the cross which the little one sees depicted on a crucifix? Again we have the case of a man who is separated from the Church either by distance or by the prejudice of his early teaching. How is such a one to make an act of faith in the Church's teaching? And, if he cannot, is he to be lost for the want of it, since without faith it is impossible to please God?

The motive of faith

The answer is that belief in the Church is no part of the act of faith in itself any more than belief in one's mother. The act of faith is belief in the truthfulness of God's message because it is God's message and for that reason alone and this act includes belief in God's truthfulness and His wisdom which cannot be deceived. But before one believes it is perfectly clear that one must know that what he has received is God's message and the question remains as to how this is to be known. We can know this either immediately or mediately, that is, we can know it from God Himself speaking to us, or from someone to whom God has spoken or who has it from someone who ultimately received it from God.

The first of these two ways is not infrequent if we consider the history of the whole world. God has often spoken to particular persons who have believed His word. Saint Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews praises the faith of Noah and Abraham and Moses and others who received a message from God which was not meant for everybody. So in Christian times many saints have received revelations from God as, for instance, the revelations of the Sacred Heart to Saint Margaret Mary. So it is always possible for any man or woman to receive a message from God on which to exercise one's faith.

Private revelation

Several things must be noted, however, about revelations of this kind.

In the first place they do not compare in importance with the revelations which Christ made to His Apostles which were to be kept and given to all men down to the end of time. Private personal revelations are not a part of the message of Christ. Hence one could reject the revelations of Saint Margaret Mary (though we should be wanting in piety if we did so wantonly and rudely) without becoming a heretic or a rejecter of Christ's message.

Public revelation

In the second place persons are often subject to delusion in the matter of private revelations. Excellent men and women have imagined themselves the recipients of a divine message when there was no other origin for their conceits than their own excited feelings. Whereas, there is no possibility for delusion in the Church's message from Christ to us. There is the ancient Church, "a city on a mountain" (Matt. V, 14) delivering the same distinct message for all time.

In the third place private revelations are outside of the ordinary plan of God by which we are not only to be saved but also sanctified. One may live and die a saint without ever having any direct revelation from God. One may become a saint by penetrating his soul with the revelation which Christ delivered to His Church for us. And as for the ordinary men and women who are not saints, it is safe to say

The ordinary plan of revelation

that by far the greater number of them never have a direct revelation from God from one end of life to the other. The faith by which they are saved rests on indirect revelation alone. Now the question is, how does indirect (or mediate) revelation ordinarily come?

It ordinarily comes from some fellow being whom for the time at least we accept as our teacher by the exercise of whatever degree of judgment we may possess at the time. Thus a child may make an act of faith on the word of its mother alone. So a man may make an act of faith on the word of a respected friend who assures him solemnly that what he is telling him is a truth that comes from God. Finally, the ordinary body of the faithful, those, I mean who have neither the talent nor the tendency to examine into the source of the revelation, make an act of faith on the instruction of their pastor, on whatever he may say.

Compare all these with the instance of a man of inquiring mind well furnished with the talent and the means of investigation. He not only carefully assures himself that such and such a doctrine is explicitly taught by the Church but he studies and learns the Church's grounds for teaching it and so makes himself scientifically certain that this is indeed a part of the message of Christ. In all the first three instances there could, more or less easily, be error. The mother might be wrong; so might the friend and so, in a much more rare case, might the pastor. Yet the child through all its childhood never questions the authority of its mother, nor does a simple man ever question a trusted friend and many unlettered members of a congregation pass their lives without ever once thinking of verifying the words of their pastor. Can the assent of all these on grounds that differ so widely be made with the same firmness?

A scientific inquirer

Yes, they all can and must be. Because in every case it is the word of God alone which is taken in an act of faith. We *believe* that the thing which God has revealed is true. At the same time we *believe* that He has revealed it and that

He is all truthful and all knowing. These two things may, clearly, not always be explicitly mentioned in our act of faith nor may we always be explicitly conscious of them. But they are always there *implicitly* and so it is that the act of faith is always made with the same absolute and unalterable firmness, no matter what may have been the grounds of the *preliminary act of belief* in the witness to God's word. These grounds may be nothing more than what would satisfy the pious credulity of a child or of an unlearned listener, or they may be such as would satisfy an inquiring and learned man. In all cases the assent of faith proper is the same: I believe because God has revealed it; I believe that He has revealed it; I believe that He is all-truthful and cannot lie, that He is all-knowing and cannot be deceived.

The motive of faith never changes

This will be made clearer by a little concrete amplification.

I believe that there are three Persons in one God. I assent to this truth because God has revealed it. I could have no other sufficient reason for assenting to it since it is a mystery which human reason could never have found out for me. But if there is any lack of firmness in my belief of the fact that He has revealed it and that He is all truthful and all knowing, then my whole act of faith is vitiated. My act would resolve itself into something like this: I believe that there are three Persons in one God *if* God has revealed it and *if* He is incapable of deceiving me or of being deceived Himself. But *I am not absolutely certain on these two points.* This would not be an act of faith at all.*

Analysis of an act of faith

It must be emphasized, however, that a man should use his intelligence, according to the degree that it has been given to him, in assenting to something as revealed by God. In other words he must be reasonably sure that his teacher is at least mediately in touch with someone who has received God's revelation. If he does not do this he exposes himself

Obligation of reasonable inquiry

* This analysis of the act of faith is that of Suarez and of those who follow the great Spanish theologian. It should be noted, however, that others of considerable eminence follow a different explanation.

more or less culpably to nullifying his act of faith. We cannot make an act of faith in something which God has not revealed.

And so an educated man cannot be accused of doubting the divine authority of the Church if he explores the way in which the Catholic keeps in touch with the revelation which Christ our Lord made nearly two thousand years ago or, rather, the way in which she keeps that revelation whole and entire from year to year. Let us engage in an exploration like this.

To inquire is not to doubt

There are two ways of doing this. One is to see how the message of Christ travels down to us. The other is to see how the Church travels back, as it were, to the lips of Christ. We shall take the first way first.

The Apostles, as has been shown, received the message of Christ, which was to be preached to all men, from the lips of Christ Himself. Saint Matthias who was chosen to take the place of Judas, had been one of Our Lord's disciples (Acts I, 21, 22), and Saint Paul, though he was an Apostle "born out of due time" (I Cor. XV, 8), received from God very special revelations (II Cor. XII, 7) and the vocation and power of an Apostle (Acts IX, 15).

Apostles taught by Christ

It must, moreover, be remembered that Christ was not the only divine Person Who in a special way prepared the Apostles for their mission. On the occasion of His Last Supper Our Lord speaks to His Apostles of "the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind (i.e., make clear to you) whatsoever I shall have said to you" (John XIV, 26). Note that Our Lord does not say that the Holy Ghost will teach them anything new but that He will make clear to them Our Lord's own message. We must remember how cloudy the Apostles were about Christ's teaching up to the very moment of His ascension, and above all how weak their *wills* were in the matter of faith. But when the Holy Ghost came upon them at Pentecost all was changed.

Also by the Holy Ghost

They who had been weak and wavering learners became clear and fearless teachers.

Each of the Apostles had the whole of revelation

Each of the Apostles possessed the whole of the message of Christ, or all that revelation which He wished to be given to the world. And the Apostles after Pentecost began at once to give out what they had received. How did they impart it? First and principally by word of mouth. They preached in person. They instructed others who should instruct others in ever widening circles; for we must always bear in mind that every bit of their message was for every age of the world that should come after them. When the last of the Apostles died the message was completely delivered. No word of it remained to be spoken.

No new revelation after the Apostles

After the death of the Apostles God delivered no more revelation meant for the whole of mankind.* There might be, as we have seen, private revelations. But these had no authority to compel the belief of mankind nor any necessary connection, as the message of Christ had, with the salvation of mankind.

Whole Church received the whole of revelation

The Apostles delivered the whole of their message to the whole body of the faithful who immediately followed them. They did not deliver it to one man or to a select body of men but to all the Church, the teachers and the learners together. It is true that they appointed men to succeed them as official teachers who were to appoint others after themselves down to the end of time. These are the bishops of the Church who have Christ's commission to see that His message is passed on entire and suffers no corruption. It is also true that all the bishops together were from the first infallible in the matter of Christ's message and one among them, the Bishop of Rome, was endowed with personal infallibility in the same matter. But it is not true that the Apostles delivered their message exclusively to the bishops or to the Pope. They de-

* This is clear from the constant teaching (*magisterium*) of the Church; also the condemnation of Pius X: "Revelation which constitutes the object of the Catholic faith was not completed with the Apostles" (D. 2021). The letter "D" refers to *Enchiridion Symbolorum et Definitionum*, compiled by H. Denziger.

livered it to the whole Church and the Church as a whole possessed it.

And how, we may ask, was the presence of this message or doctrine manifested in the Church? It was manifested first of all by the spoken and written words of the teachers but also by the daily conversation, whether written or spoken, of the ordinary faithful, by the letters they wrote to their friends, the inscriptions they wrote on monuments or gravestones. Finally its presence was manifested by what their pagan enemies said of them. An ancient caricature was discovered in the last century on the walls of one of the Roman palaces depicting a figure with an ass's head fixed on a cross with a single worshipper beneath. The inscription reads, "Alexamenos worshipping his God." It is assigned to the third century and so what was evidently meant as a bitter insult is become a witness to the presence in that early age of the dogma of Christ's Divinity, no inconsiderable part of His message. This message was *authoritatively* preserved and passed on by the official teachers but it was *actually* preserved and passed on by the learners as well. And over both learners and teachers Christ's unfailing providence extended in a special way as we shall see.

The presence of the revelation in the Church

This preservation and passing on of Christ's deposit of revelation by authorized teachers is called Tradition. But a special means was added to this which requires some consideration here.

Tradition

We refer to the Holy Scriptures or to that collection of books which were inspired * by God and therefore, of course, contain God's revelation. They are divided into the Old and New Testament according as they were written before or after the coming of Christ. Those that were written before His

Holy Scripture

* Inspiration in the theological sense means an impulse to write which comes directly from God and is accompanied all through the act of writing by the Divine direction and assistance so that the inspired writer puts down all that God wishes and only what He wishes. It is, in a word, a way in which God makes Himself the Author of the book. This is made clear by the words of one of the Church's confessions of faith which reads, "We believe that one and the same God is the *author* of the Old and the New Testament." Symbol of Faith promulgated by Leo IX (D. 348).

coming contain many references to Him and even to the details of His passion and resurrection. So it was that Our Lord said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures—and the same are they that give testimony of me" (John V, 39).

Old Testament

The Old Testament also contains the history of God's doings from the creation of the world and His dealings with men through many centuries and His precepts concerning the service of God by man. In these two capacities the Old Testament is addressed to all men to the end of time and its sacredness was re-enforced and reaffirmed by Christ when He came. But the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament which were meant for the Jews during the time of their waiting for Christ are subject to abolition by Christ the Supreme Lawgiver in Whom the Old Law was perfectly fulfilled. Such laws are the law of circumcision and of forbidden food and also the law of setting aside the seventh day for worship.

Ceremonial and universal laws

It would, of course, be impossible for Christ to set aside any laws which are essentially incumbent on a rational creature as such. It follows, then, that everything that is stated in the Old Testament must be the object of our faith and, since its truth and sacred origin was reaffirmed by Christ, it can be justly called a part of the message of Christ.

New Testament

But in the New Testament we have something which reflects Christ more intimately. We have, first, in the Gospels, descriptions of Christ's very actions. The very words He uttered are given to us. Then, all the books, whether they be historical narratives like the Gospels or the Acts, or letters of the Apostles, or a prophecy like the Apocalypse, were written by men who came into personal contact with Our Lord or with the eye-witnesses of what He did, and dealt with what He came to teach the world. No Christian could doubt for a moment that we can make an act of faith on something which we find clearly stated in the Gospels or the New Testament.

But now the question comes to decide which of the two, Scripture or Tradition, is the more perfect vehicle or carrier

of the message of Christ. There is no doubt whatever about the answer. Tradition is the more perfect vehicle and for several reasons.

Is Scripture or Tradition the better guide of faith?

First there is no certainty that Scripture contains the whole of Christ's message. The complete message of Christ was given to the Apostles but only six of the Apostles (Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James and Jude) contributed anything whatever to the Scriptures and half of these (Peter, James and Jude) left only one, two or three very short letters which evidently contain only a small part of the doctrine of Christ. Not one of the Scripture writers declares or insinuates that he is giving all the doctrine of Christ, and Saint John who wrote by far the richest doctrinal Gospel of them all says expressly, "Many other signs Jesus did in the sight of His disciples which are not written in this book." And he says again that if all the things which He did were written the world would not be able to contain the books that should be written (John XX, 31; XXI, 25).

Scripture is incomplete

Then a careful examination of the Scriptures shows that they are not a doctrinal code or a book that is meant for teaching. The Gospels are a collection of incidents from the life of Christ together with sayings from His lips. It is true they contain doctrine and make the surest of proofs if the meaning of the text is clear. But they are by no means what would be called in modern language a text-book. The Acts of the Apostles is the same as the Gospels, and the different Epistles which remain are addressed to some local need and touch, indeed, on doctrinal points but leave many more untouched upon. The Apocalypse of Saint John, the last book in the New Testament, is a book of strange prophecies and difficult symbols. This book illustrates perhaps better than the others what is true of all the others, namely that the Scripture needs a teacher and without a teacher it is often like an enigma.

The Scripture not a text-book

The history of Christianity bears this out wonderfully. The Arians in the fourth and fifth centuries denied the

divinity of Our Lord and supported their heresy by texts from Scripture. Then in the sixteenth century when Protestantism arose, the insufficiency of the Bible to teach by itself was terribly proved; for from that time till now, nearly four hundred years, as many sects have arisen in Protestantism as there are pages in the Bible. And each one has a different interpretation of the message of Christ and each proves its position by the text of Scripture.

Scripture used to support error

The strongest proof of the superiority of Tradition to the Scriptures is the well-known historic fact that the Scriptures had to look to Tradition for their recognition and establishment. For nearly four centuries after Christ there was no Bible as we know it now. Some books of it were received in one part of the Church, some in another. Then the authority of the Church, the keeper of her Tradition, declared that the books which now make up the Bible were God's word and rejected as not inspired a number of other books which had gained some currency among the faithful and are now called "apocryphal." Saint Gregory of Nyssa, one of the Fathers of the Church who died at the end of the fourth century, says, "It suffices for the proof of what we say that we have coming down to us from the Fathers Tradition as a sort of heritage transmitted to us from the Apostles by succession through the holy men who followed them." (Orat. 3, c. Eunom.)

Scripture dependent on Tradition

With this understanding of the meaning of Tradition we can say that there are two distinct means by which the message of Christ finds its way down to the Church of the present day. One is the inspired writings or the Scriptures, the other is the living teaching voice of the Church from the earliest times. The first is subordinate to the second as a dead page is subordinate to a *living mind* though they both contain the same thought, or, better, as the living author of a book is above the book. To Tradition the Scriptures had to look for authentication as to their inspiration and for the last word as to their sense.

Subordination of Scripture to Tradition

Method of searching revelation

And now let us see the method which the Church of today uses in order to discern or identify any part of the revelation that it received in full long ago. In other words how does the Church of each succeeding generation find her way back to the time when the message which she keeps was fresh from the lips of the Apostles who had it from Christ? Neither the present day teachers of the Church, not even the Pope himself, claim to have any direct revelation from God nor are their words inspired by Him as the Scriptures were inspired. Inspiration, like revelation, as far as it regards the message of Christ to all mankind was finished with the death of the last Apostle. What method then does the Church use?

Historical method

She uses very much the same methods that a scientifically trained historian uses to establish some distant fact from documents and distant witnesses. There is this one great difference, though. The historian can be deceived, no matter how careful he is; but the Church cannot be deceived when she exercises the fullness of her authority.

A clear text of Scripture bearing on the matter which the Church is investigating is always a sure sign of revelation. But what we are rather looking for now are the signs of Tradition.

The Fathers and Doctors

One sign of the Church's Tradition is the unanimous consent of the Fathers or the Doctors of the Church. These are learned and holy men who stood out in the age in which they lived as monumental teachers of the Church's doctrine.* The Fathers are distinguished from the Doctors inasmuch as they were not only learned and holy but also lived in the early ages of the Church. The last recognized Father, Saint Gregory the Great, died in 604. The truth that such men reflect Tradition follows from the very definition of a Father and a Doctor. They were the outstanding teachers of the Church; the Church made them her mouthpiece and the whole Church received their teaching.

* Origen (185), Theodoret (303) and Tertullian (ab. 160), though not Fathers in the strict sense, are reckoned with them for the eminence and antiquity of their writings.

Quotations from the Councils

The Church's Councils (or the Assemblies of the Church's teachers) are filled with references to the teaching of the Fathers. The first Council of Nicæa (325) defined the divinity of Christ, "supported by the testimony of the *Fathers.*" (Athanasius, Letter to the Africans.)

The First Council of Constantinople (381) made a ruling that the Macedonians (heretics) should be interrogated as to whether or not they were willing to stand by the judgment of the *Fathers* who flourished before those heresies had arisen about which there was discussion at the time (Socrates, Hist. Eccles.)

The Council of Ephesus (431) declared, "It hath been the Divine pleasure that nothing else is to be believed by the men that come after us except what hath been held by the sacred antiquity of the holy Fathers in full agreement among themselves." (Mansi, Joann. Domin., IV, 1183.)

The third Council of Valence (non-ecumenical) says (855), "And so without hesitation we submit unto the *Doctors* our attention with all reverence and our understanding with all obedience . . . and with all our powers we embrace what they have written for the benefit of our salvation" (D. 320.)

Theologians

The unanimous and constant consent of theologians though they enjoy the title neither of Fathers nor of Doctors is a certain sign of the Church's Tradition or of the presence of divine revelation. This follows from the same argument that held for the Fathers and the Doctors. The theologians are the active teachers and explainers of the Church's doctrine and their teaching taken all at once has the tacit approval of the Universal Church and the most intimate connection with the Church's divine authority. Pope Pius IX makes this clear in his letter to the Archbishop of Munich in 1869 where he says, "For even though there is question of that subjection (to God's revelation) which must be rendered by an act of divine faith, this (subjection) must not indeed be limited to those things which have been defined by the explicit decrees of the Ecumenical Councils and of the Roman Pontiffs and of

this our See, but must be extended also to those things which by the ordinary teaching body (*magisterio*) of the whole Church spread over the world are handed down as revealed by God and hence are held to belong to the faith by the universal and constant agreement of Catholic *theologians*" (D. 1683).

Finally, the unanimous consent of all the faithful on a point of doctrine is an infallible sign that there is the Tradition of the Church and God's revelation or the message of Christ. This is clear from what we have said about the message of Christ being delivered not only to the Church's teachers but also to the learners who must reflect passively the active infallibility of the universal Church. When Christ said that the "gates of hell should not prevail" against His Church He referred both to the taught as well as the teachers and it would be just as impossible for Him to allow the whole body of His Church to believe what He had not revealed as to teach the same. This is expressed by the ancient saying, "The law of praying is the law of believing," * and also by the famous sentence of the great Saint Augustine, "The whole world is a safe judge." † He means, of course, the whole Catholic world; for in his time there were no Protestant Christians.

The universal belief of the faithful

We must draw two conclusions from all that we have said. The first is that the teaching Church uses only human wisdom and diligence when she would find her way back, as it were, to the original message of Christ or when, to put it another way, she would explore the treasure of revelation which she possesses. The Church's teachers simply explore the pages of Scripture and how it was understood in the earliest times; they search out what the Fathers taught and what was the current belief of the faithful. Neither the Pope nor the Church's teachers are, as we said before, inspired by God nor do they receive any revelation from Him when they declare a doctrine to be revealed. The inspiration and the revelation

* *"Lex orandi est lex credendi."*
† *Securus judicat orbis terrarum."*

The aid of the Holy Spirit

were finished long ago and the message was completed and sealed. But to the human wisdom and diligence there is always added the watchful active presence of the Holy Spirit providing that this teacher, either taken collectively as the whole body or singly as the Chief Pastor speaking to all, shall never misinterpret the message or fail to deliver it unchanged to the last.

Subjective and objective motives of faith

The second conclusion is concerning the rule of faith or the preliminary motive that can make us sure enough to make an act of faith. We can divide these motives into two classes, subjective and objective. By the first we mean any motive which suffices here and now to move me to make an act of faith, from the word of a serious friend to a clear and moving passage of Holy Scripture. But such rules are not infallible and do not secure us against the possibility of believing what is not so. The second rule or motive of faith we call objective or one that is sufficient *in itself,* whether it moves us or not, to secure us against the possibility of error. There is only one such motive. *It is the teaching today of the Catholic Church.* It is for her to decide with absolute certainty whether a passage in Scripture is clear or not, whether the Councils, the Fathers, the Doctors or the theologians of the past have taught such and such a doctrine, or whether the body of the faithful believed it. Motived by her teaching our faith is secure. "Rome has spoken," says Saint Augustine, "and the matter is finished."

All the other sources named, though they be holy, are reducible to a *dead page.* The living Church is the only *living voice.*

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between private and public revelation?
2. What is the motive of faith?
3. Who besides the official teachers received the message of Christ?
4. What is meant by Tradition?

5. Why is Tradition superior to Holy Scripture?
6. What laws of the Old Testament could not be abolished by Christ?
7. Was the Scripture ever used to support error?
8. Why have the Fathers and Doctors of the Church authority?
9. What authority has the universal belief of the faithful?
10. Why is the living Church the best rule of faith?

CHAPTER III

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF FAITH

What do we believe?

We come now to consider the subject matter of faith or those things which we assent to the truth of in an act of faith. The truth to which we assent in faith is the truth revealed by God whatever it may be. It is clear that we must distinguish between private and public revelation. God can privately reveal to me any truth whatever. He can reveal the day of my death or something that is happening now in some distant place and I can accept His revelation by a true act of faith. But by public revelation we mean those truths which God has revealed and given into the care of His Church to be taught to *all mankind.*

Purpose of revelation

It should be inserted here that the purpose of God in revealing truths to man is, ultimately, that He Himself may be better known, His goodness, His wisdom, His law.* This follows from the very nature of the relation between God and His creatures. God could not enlighten a creature for the mere sake of enlightening him.

Every act of faith implicitly includes all revelation

But to return to the subject, public revelation is given to all mankind and all mankind has the obligation of receiving it. It is evident that anyone who believes God when He reveals even the smallest truth believes at the same time all that He has revealed, at least *implicitly;* for he believes, as we have seen, in the very act of faith that God is all-truthful and all-knowing. Now the question is to examine more narrowly what is included in God's public revelation.

Implicit revelation

This revelation includes all that was explicitly revealed by Christ to His Apostles for His Church. That much is self-evident. But it also includes all that is implicitly contained

* "Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John XVII, 3).

in His revelation to His Apostles. There is no record, for instance, that Christ ever taught His Apostles anything about the creation of the world nor did He ever mention the name of the present Pope, Pius XI. Can we then believe as part of Christ's revelation that God created the world and that Pius XI is the vicar of Christ on earth? We can, because Christ revealed to His Church that the Old Testament is divinely inspired, wherein we find an account of the creation of the world. He revealed also that Peter and his successors should be His vicars on earth and so included in this revelation all the actual successors of Peter, among them the present Pontiff.

Truth found by reason alone is not subject for Faith

Two conditions are necessary that a thing may be believed. First it must be true; second it must be revealed. The second includes the first since God cannot reveal what is not true. But the first by no means includes the second. Hence a pagan philosopher cannot *believe* in God Whom he has found out by his reason alone. He must receive some revelation from God either directly or indirectly. Hence also, we cannot believe what we argue by natural reason from God's revelation but what is in no way included in it.

Thus we can argue fairly:

All the parts of an argument must be revealed

Anyone who preached to the common people of Palestine spoke the Aramaic tongue. But Our Lord preached to the common people of Palestine. Therefore, Our Lord must have spoken the Aramaic tongue. We can be perfectly sure of this conclusion; but we cannot say that it is *revealed* and so we cannot make it the object of our faith. The reason for this is that an essential part of the argument is not revealed, namely, the first of the three statements: Anyone who preached, etc. This statement can be established by human reason and investigation, but that is, clearly, a very different thing from being revealed by God. The second of the above statements: Our Lord preached, etc., *is* revealed. All the Gospels are a plain testimony to it. And if the first statement were, like the second, revealed, then the conclusion would be revealed

since it would be contained, according to the laws of logic, in the two preceding ones.

Canonization of a saint

The principal object of the Church's teaching is, as we have seen, to deliver to men those things which Christ has revealed. But the Church is not content with this. She is a supreme teacher presiding over the intellectual life of the world in all things which concern her message. The Church, therefore, canonizes a saint, or declares that such and such a man or woman is with God and may be prayed to for intercession; she establishes by her approval a Religious Order to work for the benefit of the Church; on the other hand, she brands some doctrine as dangerous to the faith, offensive and not conducive to the good morals of the faithful. In such things the Church *may* not declare that her doctrine is revealed or contained in the explicit message of Christ. Nevertheless when she uses the fullness of her authority in such declarations she must be infallible; otherwise she would not be a divine teacher nor vindicate the promise of Christ that the gates of hell should not prevail against her. A Church that can err is in no sense divine. That the Church claims this infallibility in all her appeals to her supreme authority is clear from the constant practice and teaching of the Church herself.

Ecclesiastical faith

There is some dispute among theologians as to the kind of faith with which we believe the Church's teaching when she is not defining a doctrine revealed by God. By many this is called ecclesiastical faith and is distinguished from the divine faith with which we believe the precise revelation of God. We do not decide this controversy. But it is certain that if the Church does not define something as revealed we are not obliged to accept it as revealed. No one denies that ecclesiastical faith is a virtuous act and meritorious for salvation, since it contains the obedience of the mind and the will to God's appointed teacher. And so, on the other hand, wilful refusal to believe this teacher is a sin.

The Church does not always use the plenitude of authority

when she teaches. She constantly teaches through her Congregations, such as the Congregation of the Holy Office and the Congregation of Rites. These Congregations are not infallible and so cannot demand for their decrees the assent which is demanded by the plenitude of the Church's authority. But they do demand our complete intellectual obedience both interior and exterior. They speak with certain not with conjectural knowledge and with the authority of the gravest of human tribunals. It is very distressing to hear, as one sometimes does, a Catholic say of some ecclesiastical decree, "Oh, the Church is not infallible in that. I don't have to believe it." Such persons show by their words that they lack the reverence for authority which is a sign of civilization and that they are failing in their obedience as faithful children of the Church.

Congregations

The Church in her teaching uses certain designations with regard to doctrines which are called "theological notes." They can be divided into three classes. The first and the highest note is "of faith." This indicates that the doctrine is part of the deposit of faith given by Christ to His Church. The note is further divided into, "of faith defined," (i.e. explicitly declared by the supreme authority of the Church) or "of faith from the Church's constant teaching," (i.e. without any explicit definition). The note which is placed on any doctrine opposed to this is "heretical" (i.e. contrary to Christ's revelation to the Church.) Doctrines are also marked with the note "approximating faith" and the contrary doctrine "approximating heresy." In all these cases both the doctrine and its condemnation can be made the object of an act of faith, though in the last instance we have no obligation since absolute surety is lacking and our act of faith *may*, of course, be void.

Theological notes

The second class of doctrines are marked, "theologically certain," those, namely, which are connected by a certain argument with a revealed truth. The mark of the contrary doctrine is "erroneous."

Theologically certain

Here there is no obligation of faith because the proposition in question is not a part of revelation. But I cannot deny such a proposition without, on the one hand, doing violence to my reason, and, on the other hand, endangering my reverence for the revealed truth from which the proposition in question is fairly argued.

Certain and common

The last class of doctrines may be called grave theological judgments and they are marked with the note "certain and common." They do not generally deal with revealed facts as such, though, if they do, they can motivate an act of faith since they represent the careful judgment of theologians. But they usually deal with the import or further interpretation of revealed doctrines over and above their explicit content. The doctrines contrary to these are marked "rash."

The unfolding of revelation

We must now consider the matter of the development or unfolding of the original deposit of revelation in the course of the Church's life in the world. All the revelation was given to the Church in the beginning but all was not explicitly presented *to the whole Church at once.* This is clear from a consideration of the Church's history. It is clearly defined now that certain books which together we call the Bible were written by God's inspiration. But for nearly four hundred years a Catholic might have denied this without being a heretic. The same is true of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was not defined till after the middle of the last century (1854) and the infallibility of the Pope which was defined fifteen years later. These doctrines were not delivered at this late date to the Church. That is clear from what we have already said. Nor were they lost for a time and then recovered. No. They were taught in the beginning by the Apostles but not exclusively to any separate body of men in the Church but to the whole Church at once, to be taught and guarded by the teachers, to be learned and cherished by the learners and to sanctify and save both through all time.

Not all doctrines defined from the beginning

This is clear from the way which the Church uses before

she defines a doctrine. She does not examine why the doctrine should be so from its own intrinsic worth but whether indications of its presence can be found in the early life of the Church. And so when she comes to the definition she does not define it as revealed for the first time nor even as believed for the first time, but as indicated in the Scriptures, according to the original understanding of them, in Tradition, in the teaching of the Fathers or in the prayers and pious records of the faithful. It was part of the implicit faith of the whole Church but the whole Church had not before concentrated her explicit attention on it and expressed and limited it in the exact language of sacred science. Take each of the above-mentioned doctrines separately so that our meaning may be more clear.

All defined as revealed from the beginning

The books of the Bible were held sacred from the beginning. There was not one of them that was not *somewhere* in the Church *explicitly believed* to be inspired. But one part of the Church was devoted to some of the books and other parts to others. (The four Gospels were the first to become current everywhere.) And there were associated with the inspired books other books which contained pious traditions of the life of Our Lord and reached back to the times close to His. Then at length the Church in the person of Pope Damasus toward the end of the fourth century fixed its attention on the matter and the canon (as it is called) was drawn up.

Canon of Scriptures

So with Our Blessed Mother. She was always hailed as full of grace and all pure and no stain of sin either actual or original was ever attributed to her by the Church. And some part of the early Church must have *explicitly* believed in her Immaculate Conception. But only in the fullness of time did the Church turn her attention to this doctrine and define the exact meaning of her purity for the whole Church.

Immaculate Conception

Finally, with regard to the Pope; he was always before the Church in the character of an infallible teacher. The infallibility of the Church was personal in him alone. Some

Infallibility of the Pope

Christians in the first days explicitly believed him infallible. But the doctrine of his infallibility defined in exact scientific terms was not authoritatively given to the whole Church until a little over half a century ago.

There are two ways of believing what God has revealed: one is explicitly, i.e., naming the truth to which we give our assent; the other way is implicitly, i.e., by believing what contains the truths of revelation without naming or even knowing the truths so contained. It is clear that men are not bound to an explicit knowledge of and faith in all the truths that God has revealed. The very fact that some of the truths that God has revealed were not explicitly proposed to all the faithful until centuries after the Church was founded proves this sufficiently. Again, the mastering of the Church's deposit of revelation is an extensive study for which some men have neither the energy nor the talent. Some simple uneducated men and many, too, of ample education come near the end of their lives to find that some things are taught by the Church which they never knew before. The whole matter resolves itself into the following question: What should the average Catholic learn or be taught of those truths which God has revealed?

Explicit and implicit faith

The answer is that he should be taught the articles of faith or those truths the explicit knowledge of which is necessary for our life as Christians and possessors of the message of Christ. Such articles of faith are found in the creeds (or symbols) which the Church has constructed for the faithful, the earliest example of which is the Apostles' Creed. It must be noted, however, that when one is about to receive any of the sacraments in the course of his duty as a Christian, he is also bound to instruction in the meaning of the sacrament which he is about to receive. It should also be noted that the articles of faith as found in the Creed must include implicit belief in all that God has revealed. It is also true that the consideration of the articles of faith will lead a devout mind into greater and greater knowledge of Christian revela-

Articles of faith

tion. For the whole framework of revelation hangs so closely together that each part however small is thoroughly grasped only by understanding other parts and so on throughout the whole fabric. No study is so noble as theology. A very good resolution to make on leaving college would be to employ a little time every day in the study of the Church's doctrines. It would be far more valuable than the practice, so exalted by Protestants, of reading the Bible.

There comes now the case of a dying man who is to be instructed for Baptism and reception into the Church. The question is how much is he to be taught in the very short time that is available. He should be taught the existence of God Who rewards and punishes and then of the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God. These are in the very forefront of revelation. And so these truths are the first to be taught to a child.

How much knowledge is essential to an act of faith?

When all this is said we must reject the assertion which is very common among Protestant teachers in which they distinguish between truths of faith which are fundamental and those which are not fundamental and would make the second of these outside the subject matter of faith either implicit or explicit.

Reject "fundamental truths"

The last question brings us back to what we said in the first chapter about an act of faith being absolutely necessary for salvation. We may ask how much must be believed in this act of faith without which, no matter what a man's ignorance or lack of opportunity may be, he cannot be saved. He must believe that there is a God and believe it because he believes that God has revealed it. But the words of Saint Paul and the Church's understanding of them make it clear that this is not enough. For this Apostle says, "For he that cometh to God must believe that he (God) is, and is a rewarder to them that seek him" (Heb. XI, 6). Pope Innocent XI condemned as one of the errors of the Jansenists in 1679 the proposition, "Nothing more than belief in one God seems to

St. Paul's rule

be necessary by a necessity of means (i.e. with absolute necessity) and not explicit belief in Him as one who rewards." *

From this it follows that every living man who has come to the use of reason must make an act of faith in a God Who rewards and punishes. How a man with no other man to teach him is to get this knowledge we do not know. We must leave the way to God Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. II, 4).

God will supply a teacher

TEST QUESTIONS

1. **Why cannot I believe what my reason alone has found for me?**
2. **Can I believe the conclusion of an argument when the premises are only partly revealed?**
3. **Can I believe the canonization of a saint?**
4. **Why should I accept the teaching of a Congregation?**
5. **What is a theological note?**
6. **Has all the message of Christ always been explicitly believed by all the Church?**
7. **What is the canon of the Scriptures?**
8. **What is an article of faith?**
9. **What is the least that must be believed?**
10. **In what sense must "fundamental truths" be rejected?**

* Some theologians hold that explicit faith in the Trinity and the Incarnation is likewise absolutely necessary (i.e. *necessitate medii*) for salvation. On this account there is grave obligation to instruct a dying person in these revealed truths, if time and circumstances permit.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

This chapter deals with the proof of the existence of God by reason alone. The fact of revelation, which we have been supposing all along from the previous volume, includes the supposition that God exists. But now we isolate the idea of God, as it were, and consider whether it has a purely rational origin as well as its origin from faith.

God the Ruler of the universe

The fact that God is also the Creator of the universe will be dealt with in another chapter. The essential attributes of God, including His infinity, will also be treated later. Now we wish to establish the existence of a Being Who is over us all, and on Whom we all depend. We can call this the popular concept of God.

The arguments which prove the need of a Supreme Being are so plain that if they are fairly presented it is impossible for a man with a normal faculty to deny them or to fail to perceive the evidence of them. In other words, it is impossible for a sane man who attends to the matter not to *see* that God exists. But it is by no means impossible for a man to refuse to *believe* that God exists. Faith, as we have defined it, is a free act. The same is true even of natural faith. And so a man can turn his attention away from the arguments or he can look on the arguments themselves like mere conclusions in mathematics or astronomy in which he refuses to take an interest. In any case he can restrain his free will from embracing, as it were, the truth and so remain as long as he wishes a practical Atheist or one who does not believe in God.

Anyone can refuse to believe in God

If it be asked whether one can become an Atheist without any fault of his own, we reply that sometimes an emotional state occurs in which good people for a time do not *feel* sure

Doubts of God's existence

that they believe that God exists. This is not a rational doubt at all and may be entirely blameless.

God has revealed His existence

Supernatural faith in the existence of God requires, of course, some kind of revelation from God. It is a historical fact that God has revealed His existence and revealed much more than this and dealt in many extraordinary ways with men. The record of all these things looked at merely with the light of natural reason would make up a proof of the existence of God—the miracles of the old and the new Law, for instance, the foundation and preservation of His Church, the courage of the martyrs, and so on. But we are not concerned with this sort of proof nor are we dealing with any act of faith. We must show that the fact of the existence of God can be perceived by reason alone, even if there had never been any revelation nor any extraordinary dealings of God with men.

We must prove His existence

The Scripture teaches that God can be known by reason

The Holy Scriptures clearly insinuate that God can be found by reason alone. The Book of Wisdom says, "But all men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God; and who by these good things that are seen could not understand him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman" (Wis. XIII, 1). And Saint Paul says, "For the invisible things of him (God), from the creation of the world, are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also and divinity: so that they (men) are inexcusable" (Rom. I, 20).

The Church teaches the same

The Church teaches the same thing in many places. Gregory XVI (in his *Bautain Theses*) says distinctly, "Reason can prove with certainty the existence of God" (D. 1622).

Let us see how this is so.

Ontologism rejected

There was a school of philosophers called Ontologists who held that we have a knowledge of God because our minds immediately perceive His being just as our eyes immediately

perceive the sun. This teaching is rejected by all sound thinkers and also condemned by the Church.

Proof without experience rejected

Another school held that the proposition "God exists" can be seen by us to be true at once merely by examining it without any other experience whatever. This, too, is rejected.

Proof from experience

The only way that the existence of God can be proved by reason is by looking at ourselves and the other finite things in the world about us and from our experience with these things arguing to the existence of an uncreated cause and ruler of all things, as Saint Paul says, "understanding the invisible things by the things that are made" (Rom. I, 20).

The metaphysical argument

There are three distinct arguments for the existence of God. The first is called the metaphysical argument. It is so called because it rests on principles which are above the physical. The argument can be stated in this fashion: Everything that needs a cause must be finally traced back to something that is without a cause. But everything in this world including ourselves needs a cause. Therefore, they can all be traced to something that is without a cause, which is nothing else than tracing them back to God Himself. If we ask why everything that we see about us and we ourselves need a cause, the answer is simply to look at everything including ourselves. Were there not causes other than ourselves that brought us into existence? And so with the things about us, we know some of the causes responsible for the soil, the rocks, the rivers and the clouds, and science is constantly discovering more. But these causes depended on other causes and these on others and so on back to a cause that has no cause.

We might object here that this only proves the existence of an original push to set the energies of the world working. And this push might have been no more than a blind force in nature, nothing resembling God at all. But it is a metaphysical principle that a cause cannot produce anything greater than itself and therefore that original push must have contained in itself at least as much power and wisdom as we find within us or without us in the world.

The Pantheists held that everything is a part of God and so the changes in the world and in ourselves are changes in God. But this is evidently not so. In the first place God, as we shall see later, is by His very nature unchangeable. In the second place I am conscious that I am a separate personal being in myself and not a part of any other being and I see that the world around me is full of such beings which are just as separate as I am.

Pantheism

The second argument is called the physical argument. It is so called because it depends on the physical laws or those rules which govern the blind forces in the world. These forces are bound by unchanging laws. It is the unchangeableness of these laws which makes science possible and many kinds of human endeavor. If the physical laws were not constant it would be useless for men to build houses or ships, since a change in the physical laws would make them come down or sink. If we apply this argument to an Atheist it will make him appear very ridiculous. He does not believe in God but he trusts in the constancy of the physical laws, which constancy demands a Maker of them and His support that they may keep on as they are. Constructively the Atheist makes the following proclamation: "I do not believe that You exist, O God, but I take for granted that You will keep the roof from falling in on me while I sleep, and my ship from sinking when I travel on the sea," and so forth and so forth. The physical argument adds to the first argument the proof of the superhuman wisdom of God. For the plan of the world with its orderly association of tremendous forces both material and spiritual could not have come from a planner of merely human intelligence.

Physical argument

Inconsistency of the Atheist

Some men foolishly hold that the world could have been caused by chance. But chance is a cause which is without constancy and without design and there is both constancy and design in the forces and in the structure of the world. Thus, to admit chance as the cause of the world would be to have an effect with more in it than is found in the cause. No

reasonable person has the least difficulty in distinguishing things that are the result of purpose and those that happen by chance.

The third argument is called the moral argument. It is so called because it is drawn from the habits *(mores)* of men. The first moral fact from which we draw the argument is the fact of conscience, or that voice in the heart of every man which makes him feel responsible to a Power above him for his deliberate actions. This cannot be rationally explained by ignorant fear or deceptions practised on his childhood, or by his desire for a God, but only, in the last accounting, by man's, at least implicit, consciousness of the truth of God's existence as the Author of the moral law. It could not be from ignorance or deception because such things are soon lost by education and civilization, while the belief in God remains. It could not be from a fond desire because the conviction that there is a God is often contrary to a man's desires.

The moral argument

The second moral fact which we argue from is the historical record of man on the earth, which from the earliest times till now never bears witness to a single nation or people who did not believe in a Supreme Being. This fact has been like the fact of conscience the object of endeavors to explain it away on the grounds of superstition or fear or the imposition of tyrants on their people. But the universal character of the fact both as regards place and time makes it impossible of explanation except by the existence of God. This argument grows stronger with every age of the world's life.

The ancient and universal belief of mankind

We might object that practically all men once believed that the earth was flat. But in the first place this belief dealt with a subject for the examination of which ordinary men did not possess the means of investigation any more than about the nature and chemical constitution of the sun, the moon and the stars, whereas the existence of God is a fact open to examination by every man's reason. In the second place the world has long been converted from the error about the

earth and there are no signs of mankind's finding a new rational theory for the origin of the world.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why is it easy for any one to be an Atheist?
2. Prove from Scripture and the teaching of the Church that the existence of God can be known from pure reason.
3. What is Ontologism?
4. How do you refute Pantheism?
5. What are the three arguments for the existence of God?
6. What inconsistency does the Atheist commit?
7. What is the historical argument for the existence of God?
8. Why is not this last argument refuted by the impossible follies which mankind have believed?
9. Why can we not explain the moral law in man by ignorant fear?
10. Why can we not explain the existence of the world by chance?

CHAPTER V

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

We now come to the establishing by revelation and by reason together what are the attributes or qualities which distinguish God from everyone else. The first attribute which we consider is His oneness. This can be looked at in two ways; first, the fact that there is only one God, and secondly, that there could not possibly be more than one. This second fact, or the non-multiplicability of the divine nature is called the unicity of God.

Oneness and unicity

The oneness of God is one of the central dogmas of revelation. All through the Old Testament from the beginning where it says that *God* created heaven and earth God insists on the fact that He is one. "I am the Lord thy God—thou shalt not have strange gods before me" (Exodus XX, 1, 2, 3). In speaking of "strange gods" He did not mean that there were any gods besides Himself. He only referred to the false divinities and their idols of wood and stone which were raised up by the blindness of man. No one understood Him in any other way and the Jews kept their belief in one God through all the centuries in the midst of the polytheistic paganism.

Oneness revealed by Scripture

The Christian Church of the New Law was just as explicit in teaching the oneness of God. In the mystery of the Trinity (which we shall discuss later) the Church was ever most careful to speak of three Persons in one God and to condemn the heresy of those (Tritheists) who taught that the Trinity constituted three Gods. The ancient Nicene Creed began, "I believe in one God." In many if not most of the pagan religions in which they professed to worship many gods there was one supreme God (like Jupiter) who was the ruler and

Defined by the Church

Pagans seemed to realize it

father of the rest. Thus men seemed by their reason alone to see the impossibility of God's sharing His supremacy with another.

Unicity defined by the Church

The unicity of God is also revealed. It is implied in the ancient definitions of His oneness together with His omnipotence; and the Vatican Council says expressly (Sess. III, Ch. 1) after proclaiming God's oneness, "Who, since He is one singular." The word "singular" means "cannot be duplicated."

Proof of unicity

The proof from reason of the unicity of God flows from the establishing in God of two other attributes, His necessity and His infinity. Let us take these in turn.

by God's infinity and necessity

God's necessity means that He is a necessary being, that is, a being that *must* exist, a being that cannot even be thought of as not existing. For if we thought of God as not existing, that which we should be thinking of would not be God at all. Now the truth that God is a necessary being is contained in the metaphysical argument which we used in the last chapter to prove the existence of God. There we showed that there must be at least one uncaused Cause of all things. But this uncaused Cause must have a reason for its existence; it must be accounted for somehow. Now we cannot find the reason for the first cause's existence anywhere outside of it. This is evident from the very definition of a *first* cause. In itself are the reasons for the existence of everything else. But if the reason for the existence of the first cause cannot be found outside of it, this reason * must be found *within it.* This reason must be found in the being's essence, or that which makes the being what it is. And this is the very meaning of a necessary being, namely, a being which has the reason for its existence in its essence, *a being which must be because of what it is.*

But if God is a necessary being He must be infinite. This is the next step in our argument.

* There might be some ambiguity here since we said in the former chapter that we find the reason for God's existence *in creatures.* By that we mean the *logical* reason, that is the reason why we know that there is a God.

Infinite means without limit, that is, including in itself all possible reality. Now what is the connection between necessary and infinite? It is rather a subtle connection but if we bend our minds to it we shall see it. A necessary being is absolutely incapable of change of any kind. Why? Because a necessary being cannot lose anything of itself. If it could, it would not be necessary, at least in respect to the thing which it could lose. Necessary being means a being that *must be in all that it is.* And "must be" means the same as "cannot be lost." But if a being can lose nothing it is unchangeable. Note this carefully, for it is the crucial point of the argument. Change always implies the losing of something, whether the change be from less to more or from greater to less. If a thing grows larger, it loses the figure or the quality of smallness that it had before. If a thing passes from rest to motion, it loses, for the time at least, the quality of rest; and vice versa. Now if a thing is incapable of increase it must be infinite. If a thing cannot receive any more reality, whether it gets it from its own effort or by the gift of another, that being must include in itself all reality or it must be infinite.

Necessary being cannot increase

But God is a necessary being; therefore He is infinite. The unicity of God follows very plainly from His infinity; for there could not be two beings including in themselves all reality. Neither one of them would include the reality included by the other.*

Cannot be two infinite beings

The infinity of God is taught implicitly and explicitly all through the Scriptures and in the teaching of the Church. King Solomon cried out in his prayer to God, "The heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee" (III Kings VIII, 27), and Saint Paul says of God, "For of him and by

God's infinity in the Scripture

* There seems to be a serious difficulty here. If we hold that God in His infiniteness includes all reality, does He not include the reality of the world and so do we not agree with the Pantheists who hold that the world is God? No we do not. The answer to this difficulty will be more clear when we discuss the creation of the world by God. For the present it will be enough to say that God contains in Himself all the reality of the world *eminently*, that is, all the positive reality that is found in a stone, for instance, is found in God in an infinite degree; only the imperfection or the limitation of its perfection which is found in the stone, as in all created things, is not to be found in God.

him and in him are all things" (Rom. XI, 36). And the Vatican Council teaches "that there is one true and living God—in mind and will and in all perfection infinite" (Sess. III, Ch. 1.).

From the infiniteness of God follow at once all His other attributes. Since He includes in Himself all reality, He must be omnipotent, all-good and all-wise. But certain difficulties arise with regard to these attributes which we shall discuss in order to make these attributes clearer. Bear in mind that we are dealing with a subject in which the human mind must confess its feebleness.

Omnipotence

Why can't God sin?

The question is sometimes asked, how is it, if God can do all things, that He cannot possibly sin, cannot lie, for instance? The reason is that sin is an imperfection. It is the lack in an act of something which it should have. Surely neither God nor any act of God's could lack something which it should have. In as far as a lie is a perfection, that is, as far as it is an exercise of the power of speech or the communication of one's thought to another, it is eminently possessed by God. But in as far as it lacks truth it is impossible for Him Who is all truth. Sin is a swerving of the will from God on account of weakness. Could there be any weakness in Him Who is all-powerful? Again, sin implies not only a defect in the will but also in the understanding. For if the mind beheld God perfectly sin would be impossible. Such a defect of understanding is, clearly, impossible to God.

Goodness of God and the evil in the world

Again the question is asked, how, if God is all-good can He allow the existence of evil in the world? This has always been a grave difficulty for men and it is a fair instance of how incomprehensible is the whole plan of an infinite intelligence. We cannot fully explain it, just as we cannot explain why God made this particular world in this particular way when there were an endless number of other worlds which He could have made and numberless ways of making them. We can show, though, that the evil in the world is nothing against God's goodness or His justice.

Different schools of philosophy as well as heretics explain the presence of evil by saying that there are two supreme beings, one from whom comes all the good and another from whom comes all the evil. This explanation is rejected by the arguments which prove that there can be only one God. It is also condemned by the Church which, in the Council of Florence (1438), condemns "the madness of the Manicheans who have upheld (the doctrine) that there are two first causes, one of things visible and the other of things invisible" (D. 707). **Manicheism**

To deal with this difficulty we must understand the nature of evil. Evil, of whatever kind, consists in the lack of something. Nothing is positively evil. All the reality that everything has is good while the evil with which anything is afflicted is nothing else than the lack of more reality. It follows then from the presence of evil in the world that God could have made a more perfect world than this one. This is perfectly true. He could have made a more perfect world. But we must note carefully that any world which God should make must be lacking in absolute perfection, must have only a limited degree of reality. God could not make an absolutely perfect world; for that would be to exhaust His omnipotence which is inexhaustible. **Nature of evil**

In the next place we must realize the truth that if all the evil were removed from this world and this world were in other respects left just as it is, a tremendous amount of good would be removed from the world at the same time; since so much good in this world as it is, is necessarily connected with the evil in it. **Evil is connected with good**

To understand this we must consider the two kinds of evil. The first is physical evil such as pain and sickness and death. If these things were taken out of the world, the world would lack the splendid energy of struggle and the peculiar joy of victory over obstacles. This is manifested even in the plant world by the constant renewal of life from decay and death, and more so in the brute world by the animal's pursuit of **Physical evil**

what its instinct demands even through toil and pain; in its flight from harm and its courage against menacing danger. But it is manifested much more splendidly in the world of rational beings. We see men in the pursuit of ends nobler than the things of sense setting pain and toil at nought. We see the martyrs rising above their frightful torments. And here revelation comes in with a flood of light to show us Christ the Son of God battling to victory through His agony of both body and soul. Again, the presence of physical evil in the world gives opportunity for the tender exercise of mercy by which mankind bends to relieve the suffering of others—of the brute creation, but principally of his fellow man. There comes self-sacrifice, too, by which one man freely takes on himself the pains of others. So it is clear that a world without physical evil would be deprived of an immense amount of good of a peculiar kind.

The good of victory over evil

The other kind of evil in the world is moral evil. This is the lack in the free act of a free being of conformity to its last end. It is a transgression of the law of God and is commonly called *sin*. It must be noted at once that moral evil cannot be attributed to the maker of the world in the same way that physical evil can. Physical evil comes from necessary causes which were so made by God and which cannot act otherwise. But moral evil is properly attributable only to the cause which produced it, that is, to the created being who freely chooses it. This is all the more true when we consider the additional truth that God has put into the heart of every free being the voice of His law forbidding sin and the whisper of His wise counsels warning away from it. Besides this, God is always at hand with sufficient help, or grace, to enable that free being to resist the inclination to sin. So that when a man sins he must shut his ear to God's voice and reject His help and hence, clearly, have no one but himself to blame.

Moral evil

God not responsible for moral evil

But it can still be asked whether God could not have created free beings no one of whom would ever have sinned and so

make a world without any moral evil in it. We cannot deny that He could and we cannot give a reason for His choice of this particular set of men. Nor are we in any way obliged to give such a reason just as God is not obliged to give it. We can, however, use exactly the same kind of argument which we used in regard to physical evil. If there had never been any sin or any possibility of sin in the world, a particular and marvelous kind of good would be absent from the world. There would not be the heroic battle of life against the allurements of sin both in us and outside of us. There would not be the peculiar joy and glory of victory. There would not be the tender love contained in an act of sorrow for sin nor the fine triumph of rising from a life of sin to a new life of the service of God. Our Lord once spoke very wonderfully of the "joy in heaven over one sinner doing penance" (Luke XV, 7). Above all, in a sinless world there would not be the spectacle of God's mercies which the Psalmist says "are over all His works" (Ps. CXLIV, 9). It is as if the inspired writer said that God never looks so divine to us as when He is showing mercy—raising up the sinner and giving him back life when he was dead. All this is crowned by the spectacle of Christ Our Lord taking all the sins of the world upon His shoulders and purchasing mercy for men by His passion and death. The Church cries out in her liturgy, "Oh happy fall (of Adam) which merited for us such a Redeemer." This is not the language of theology but of song. It does not mean that any good result of sin could make sin less hideous in itself, that sin is any less than the greatest evil in the world and a thing which sometimes makes the world look like the work of a devil and not of God. But the Church merely wishes to express her excessive joy at the possession of the supreme mercy of God through Christ.

Mystery of moral evil

Victory over moral evil

The mercy of God

The passion of Christ

To sum up—the world with all its pain and sorrow and joy, with all its saints and sinners will yield in the end a definite amount of good. It will be no small amount, for God has Himself been so active through all the world's

God intends the good, permits the evil

existence. It was on account of this definite yield of good that God made the particular world which He made. He intended this good; He only *permitted* the moral evil.

We next come to consider God's knowledge. It follows at once from God's infinite perfection that He must be all-knowing or omniscient. Knowledge is a perfection, and so if God did not possess all possible knowledge, He would not possess all possible perfection.

Divine knowledge

The Book of Ecclesiasticus says of God, "He seeth from eternity to eternity and nothing is wonderful before him" (Ecclus. XXXIX, 25), and all the Scripture is filled with references to God's infinite wisdom. The Church, as we saw in the discussion of the act of faith, always speaks of God Whose wisdom cannot be deceived. In the decrees of the Vatican Council there is this sentence, "All things are naked and open to his (God's) eyes, even those things which are to be from the free action of creatures" (Sess. III, Ch. 1.).

Proved from Scripture

It follows from the perfection of God's knowledge that He not only knows all things that are but also all things that ever will be. If God had to wait for something to happen before He could know it, then His knowledge would increase as ours does. Again, God knows not only all things that are or will be but also all things that ever could be. We are often said not to know a thing perfectly unless we know all its possibilities. There is a dispute among theologians as to how precisely God knows the free acts which creatures will perform at some future time. The difficulty lies in the fact that a number of possible ways are open to the creature's choice and he may choose any one of them. We do not decide this dispute. We can assert for certain that God knows at once all things that will ever happen and that this knowledge interferes in no way with the freedom of man's choice, any more than if God's knowledge followed *after* the act of free choice. "In the beginning, O Lord, thou foundedst the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands. They shall perish but thou art the selfsame and thy years shall not fail"

There is no succession in divine knowledge

(Ps. CI, 26, 28). "With Him there is no change and no shadow of alteration" (James I, 17).

We have seen that God from His necessity is unchangeable or immutable. There are some difficulties which are sometimes brought against this attribute. First it is objected that God is not unchangeable since He passes from non-action to action when He creates the world or the soul of each man or when He performs miracles. The answer is that there is no change in God but only a change outside of God. God was always from all eternity exercising all the power necessary to create the world and infinitely more, but only in God's time did there arise, by God's same power, a term for His power outside of God. As far as a comparison will help us, we might say that it is like a strong light that is always shining and in which no change occurs when one or more objects are brought within reach of the light. Again it is objected that God's moral attitude changes; since a man may lose God's friendship, so that, whereas God formerly looked on him with love, He does so no longer. The answer is the same as before. The change is not in God but only in the object. By the same act God is pleased and displeased with me, since by the same act He looks with approval on what is right and with disapproval on what is wrong.

God is unchangeable

Does not change when He creates

Nor when He is displeased

The next attribute which we shall consider is the simplicity of God. Simplicity means the absence of parts and is the attribute of a pure spirit. No material or corporeal thing is simple. God's simplicity is signified in the Scripture by Job when he asks of God, "Hast thou eyes of flesh or shalt thou see as man seeth?" (Job X, 4). He means, Thou hast *not* eyes of flesh nor dost Thou see as man seeth. And the Fourth Lateran Council declared, speaking of the eternal generation of the Son in the Trinity, "And it cannot be said that He (the Father) gave to Him (the Son) a part of His substance and retained a part for Himself, since the substance of the Father is indivisible, as being absolutely simple" (Ch. 2. D. 432).

Divine simplicity

Proved from Scripture and the Council

Perfection of a simple being

It is somewhat difficult to form an idea of a simple substance since our ideas are drawn from what we see and nothing that we see is simple. What we see has an upper and a lower part, a right-hand and a left-hand one. But the simplicity of God follows from His infinite perfection. A simple being is more perfect than a composite being though they may both have the same amount of reality, because a composite being is spread out in parts each one of which supplements the other. A simple being is concentrated, all at once, as it were, and can perform higher actions, such as thought, which are impossible to a composite being.

Are there distinct attributes in God?

What seem to be objections against the simplicity of God are the different qualities and faculties which we can discern in Him. We say that God has understanding and will, that He has power and goodness and love. Are not these things different each from the other? No. This is only on account of the imperfection of our knowledge. We can only form separate ideas of God's perfections and powers because we cannot conceive a simple quality, so to call it, which includes in itself all perfections. But such is the perfection of God. He is one simple and infinite act, no collection of faculties nor combination of parts.

The remaining attributes (or those which are usually considered; for no list could ever begin to sum up His perfections) we shall touch upon briefly.

Eternity of God

God is eternal, that is, without beginning and without end, "from eternity to eternity" (Ecclus. XLII, 21). Moreover there is for God no passing from one period of time to another. All is present to Him Who by His infinite act fills the future and the past alike.

Immensity

God is also immense, that is, He fills all space by His presence and stretches infinitely beyond all actual space. And He is not present as the body of the atmosphere is present, one part in one part of space and another in another. But on account of the simplicity of His being He is everywhere present all at once, that is, with all His infinite being. ". . . heaven and the heaven of

heavens cannot contain thee'' (II Kings VIII, 27), says Solomon, and the Psalmist develops the immensity of God in a passage of rare beauty:

''Whither shall I go from thy spirit or whither shall I flee from thy face?

''If I ascend into heaven thou art there, if I descend into hell thou art present.

''If I take my wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea:

''Even there also shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me'' (Ps. CXXXVIII, 7-10).

And the Fourth Lateran Council says, ''We firmly believe and with simplicity (i.e., without equivocation) we confess that there is one true God, eternal, immense'' (Ch. 1. D. 428).

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Prove the unicity of God.
2. Why can there not be two infinite beings?
3. Why is the power to sin a weakness?
4. What is Manicheism?
5. Is God the cause of physical evil?
6. Why is God in no sense responsible for moral evil?
7. What good would be removed from the world by the removal of all evil?
8. What quality of God is manifested to us by the presence in the world of moral evil?
9. Why does God not change when He passes from non-creating to creating?
10. Define and prove the simplicity, the eternity and the immensity of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE HOLY TRINITY

Trinity is a mystery

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity teaches that in one and the same God there are three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. We depend absolutely on God's revelation for our knowledge of this truth. Human reason by itself could neither seek for it nor find it. But though this truth is strictly above reason it is in no sense against reason. God could not reveal a truth which our reason, which the same God has given us, tells us is impossible or repugnant. Our reason is most useful in regard to the Trinity to enable us to analyse and define the revelation which has been given on the subject. So the mind of the Church enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit was very busy upon it in the earliest Christian times.

How far revealed in the Old Testament?

There is some dispute among theologians as to how far the doctrine of the Trinity is revealed in the Old Testament and to what persons it was otherwise revealed before the coming of Christ. It was certainly not revealed with such explicitness and clearness so that all who read and received the pre-Christian revelation could perceive it and were bound to believe it. The Fathers of the Church commonly hold that in the passage of Genesis in which God says, "Let us make man to our image and likeness," the truth of the Trinity is insinuated. Many hold, too, that the three angels who visited Abraham (Gen. XVIII) and represented in a very special way the Person and authority of God, indicated by their number the three Persons in God.*

The Fathers also think that the Patriarchs, the Prophets and the more eminent saints of the Old Law received explicit

* Saints Eusebius, Cyril, Ambrose and Augustine.

Revealed to pre-Christian saints?

revelation of the Trinity. The reason why they did not teach the doctrine to the people may have been the tendency of mankind at the time to polytheism. But it was certainly not the plan of God that this intimate mystery of the divine nature should be taught plainly to all men until the teaching of Christ.

Plainly revealed in the New Testament

The New Testament has passages explicitly proclaiming the distinctness and the divinity of the three Persons. Perhaps the strongest single passage is the one which quotes the words of Christ when He commanded His Apostles to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. XXVIII, 19). For it is perfectly evident that He was bidding them to confer a sacred rite in the name of God, into Whose Church men were to be thus gathered and by Whose power alone the mere pouring of water could sanctify the soul. Why then should these three names be uttered if they do not express the name of God? And why should the three be equally named if they do not equally represent God?

We shall take the different passages in Scripture in which the Trinity is mentioned as we come to the different points of the doctrine. But the question may be asked whether the revelation of the Trinity is so plain in the New Testament that anyone who reads would be convinced of it without any aid from the teaching of the Church. This is answered by pointing to the history of Christianity and the many heresies on the Trinity which arose through the centuries. The Arians denied the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Macedonians that of the Holy Spirit, while conceding divinity to the Father and the Son; the Unitarians of our own day hold that there is only one Person in God. And all of these and many others are not only venerators of the Bible but have texts to support their belief.

Scripture sometimes misread

The Church has always taught that the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery in the strictest sense. Pope Leo XIII explicitly condemns the teaching that "once the mystery of

Truth of Trinity defined as mystery by the Church

the most Holy Trinity is revealed, its existence can be demonstrated by merely speculative arguments'' (D. 1915). Let us take up, then, with aid of Scripture and Tradition the principal points of the doctrine.

Review of the doctrine

First, there are three Persons, distinct each from the other, and each one is truly God. The Father is God. Nothing is more plain than this in the New Testament. It is summed up in the prayer which Christ taught His disciples, ''Our Father Who art in heaven . . .'' (Matt. VI, 9; Luke XI, 2).

Persons distinct

That the Son is God is shown by all the texts which prove the divinity of Our Lord, for example, ''I and the Father are one'' (John X, 30). That the Son is distinct from the Father is shown by the many passages in which Our Lord speaks of Himself as being with the Father, of knowing the Father, of revealing the Father to us, of being the ''Only Begotten of the Father.'' Saint John sums all up with wonderful clearness when he says at the very beginning of his Gospel, ''In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'' That the Holy Ghost is God is proved by more than one passage—for instance where Our Lord speaks of ''the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send you in my name, he will teach you all things'' (John XIV, 26). Taken in conjunction with what afterwards happened, it is evident that Christ was not speaking here of a creature but of a divine Person distinct from Himself and the Father Who should teach them as only God could teach them.

Definition of Nicæa

The Church is most explicit on the distinctness and the divinity of the three Persons. The Nicene Creed drawn up by the great Council of Nicæa made the doctrine unquestionable for all time: ''I believe in one God the Father Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God, and born from the Father before all time, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God . . . And in the Holy Ghost the Lord and life-giver Who proceedeth from the

Father and the Son, Who together with the Father and the Son is at the same time adored and glorified. . . ." (D. 86).

There are some passages in the Gospel which might seem to throw doubt on the doctrine, as in Saint John's Gospel where Our Lord says, "The Father is greater than I" (John XIV, 28). And again where He speaks of the time of the day of Judgment which, "no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father" (Mark XIII, 32). But in these passages, which also show the need of a teacher for the Scriptures, Our Lord is speaking of Himself as man and as one with a limited message from God to deliver. It is as when He said in His agony in the garden, "Not my will but thine (i.e. His Father's) be done" (Luke XXII, 42). As God He and the Father have the same will.

Contrary texts

The next point in the doctrines is the oneness of the divine nature, though this nature is triply terminated within the Godhead. This was insisted upon by the Church in the Council of Nicæa by the use of the famous word *homoousios* which means "of the same identical nature" with reference to the Father and the Son. In the same historic Council and in the controversies that followed, the Church strenuously rejected the word *homoiousios*, though it differed from the other by a single letter, because, applied to the Son, it meant "of a similar nature" with the Father. Then, at the end of the symbol or creed which the same Council drew up, the Church anathematizes those who say of the Holy Ghost that He is "of another substance" (than the Father and the Son).

Oneness of the divine nature

The most clear and forcible statement of this point of doctrine is found in the creed which is called the Athanasian. This symbol, though probably not written by Saint Athanasius who died towards the end of the fourth century, still belongs to an earlier date than the year 500. After applying the different divine attributes to each of the Persons in turn it adds, " . . . and yet there are not Three Eternals but One Eternal. As also there are not Three Uncreated nor Three

Athanasian Creed

Incomprehensibles, but One Uncreated and One Incomprehensible. . . . And yet They are not Three Almighties but One Almighty. . . . And yet They are not Three Gods but One God."

There are certain expressions to be found in liturgies and prayers which need some explanation in connection with this part of the doctrine of the Trinity. We see the Father spoken of as the One Who created us, the Holy Ghost the One Who sanctifies us. It sounds as if the Father alone was the author of the creation and the Holy Ghost is the One Who sends us grace. This cannot be so, since all actions which terminate outside of God must be attributed to God's nature which is one and which is common equally to the three divine Persons. Hence it is not true that the Father created us any more than the Son or the Holy Ghost. Yet this way of speaking which is permitted in the Church is what is called appropriation. This means that the function of creating is attributed to the Father to commemorate His paternity which is in an especial way connected with the idea of creating. So the giving of grace which is a gift of divine love is attributed to the Spirit of Love.

Appropriation

It must be noted, however, that when we speak of the Son as our Redeemer we are by no means using the figure of appropriation. God the Son alone suffered and died for us on the cross. There were heretics in the early ages of the Church who held that the Father also suffered. They were called Patripassionists and they were expressly condemned by the Church. The reason for this is that the Incarnation, or the taking of our nature by the Son of God, was not an action which terminated outside the Godhead. Inasmuch as it was the taking up of Christ's human nature into the Godhead it terminates within the Godhead Itself.*

The Son alone redeemed us

Last of all, in the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity,

* There are some spiritual writers who teach that the action of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying us is, in a certain sense, proper to the Holy Ghost alone. For we are mystically present in the Godhead in Christ's human nature which is ours. And on the human nature of Christ the action of the Holy Spirit can terminate as from a distinct Person. This is a very beautiful but very subtle doctrine.

comes the procession or the manner in which the three Persons proceed one from the other from all eternity. Here we must distinguish carefully between what is of revelation and what are the learned conjectures of the Church's theologians who have devoutly meditated over this mystery for many centuries.

The procession of the Persons

There is a double procession in the Trinity. The first is the procession of the Son from the Father and the second is the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. Both these processions are from all eternity and necessary; so that the Father never was nor could be before He begot the Son. Nor were the Father and the Son ever nor could they be before the Holy Ghost proceeded from them. These processions in their principles and in their terms constitute the very essence of God; so that just as I would not be myself if I were some other person, so God would not be Himself if He were not the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

The twofold procession

There is some difference in these two processions. By the first procession the Son is constituted. It is true that sonship or filiation in the human sense is only the faintest shadow of Sonship in the divine sense. Still we are taught by revelation to use the word Son of the second Person and the word generation or begetting for the first procession in the Trinity. "Thou art my son. This day have I begotten thee" (Heb. I, 5; Ps. II, 7). These words are understood of the begetting of the Son by the Father and the expression "today" means the presentness of all eternity to God. The procession of the Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son together and it does not constitute sonship in the divine sense. Nowhere is the Holy Spirit spoken of as the son of the Father and the Son nor would the Church tolerate language of this kind. The second procession is not, therefore, to be described as generation. The Church supplies the word "spiration" *(spiratio)*. This is all that we can say has been explicitly revealed to us. As it stands it is filled with mystery and

Filiation

Spiration

puzzling to the reason. Let us establish this much from the Scriptures and the Church's explicit teaching.

Proof from Scripture

First, as to the double procession, Saint John's Gospel says, quoting the words of Christ, "For from God I proceeded and came" (John VIII, 42). These words are taken from that discourse of Our Lord to the Jews in which He expressly declared His divinity to them. In the same Saint John's Gospel, Christ says on another occasion, "But when the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me" (John XV, 26). The words of Our Lord that He will send the Paraclete express the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son while the procession from the Father is given explicitly.

The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed has the words quoted above expressing the procession of the Son from the Father and it adds for greater clearness, "begotten not made." Then the same Creed further on with reference to the Holy Ghost says, "Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son." At different times in the first thousand years of the Church's life this doctrine was attacked by heretics, some holding that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father alone and others from the Son alone. Their attacks served as an occasion for the Church to reaffirm the doctrine so that the single word *Filioque* (and from the Son) attained to historic fame in the history of Christian theology. In the thirteenth century a large number of the Christian Churches of the East rejected the *Filioque* from their Creed. And this same rejection is today one of the few doctrinal differences that separates the schismatical Greek Church from Rome. Many great theologians hold that if the Holy Ghost did not proceed from the Son as well as from the Father, there would be no distinction between the Son and the Holy Ghost and so only two Persons in the Trinity.

Filioque

Thus far the exact revelation of God on the Trinity both in the Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church.

Theologians have labored hard with the aid of revelation to bring this mystery more within the formulas of human knowledge, that is, to express it in terms of things that we know. The opinion has come to be widely taught, though not as exactly revealed, that God the Son is the infinite act of knowledge by which God knew Himself from all eternity; and the Holy Ghost is the infinite act of love by which from this infinite knowledge God loved Himself from all eternity. We must bear in mind, in considering this, that our acts of love and knowledge are not only finite and passing and non-essential to us, since we would be ourselves without them, but also they are *acts* and no more. On the contrary, these infinite acts of God are not only necessary to make God Who and What He is, and they are not only fixed and unchanging from all eternity, but they are also more than mere *acts* as we understand the word. They are, each one, a divine *Person,* the Son and the Holy Ghost; and the principle of these acts is another divine Person, the Father with respect to the Son, and two divine Persons, the Father and the Son, with respect to the Holy Ghost.

The Son is the divine knowledge

The Holy Ghost is the divine love

Differ from human acts

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How is the Trinity a mystery?
2. How far is the Trinity revealed in the Old Testament?
3. Prove by a brief text from the New Testament.
4. What heretics used the Scripture against the Trinity?
5. Deal with some of the texts which seem to be against the Trinity.
6. Quote from the Athanasian Creed.
7. What is meant by appropriation?
8. What is the history and significance of the words *Homoousios, Homoiousios,* and *Filioque?*
9. What is the difference between filiation and spiration?
10. What is the theological theory of the infinite acts of the divine nature?

CHAPTER VII

GOD THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS

Creation

Creation means the making of something out of nothing, so that when a thing is created it passes out of absolute nothingness; in all that it actually is it *begins to be.* When we make an image out of clay or stone or a house out of building materials we merely give shape and design to the matter that we found ready for us. Sometimes a man is called a creator in the sense that he was the original author of the thought that was responsible for some project or accomplishment. This is not the sense in which the word is used in Christian theology supported by revelation. Here creation signifies the causing a thing to begin to exist out of no pre-existing materials whatever.

Proof from Scripture

That all existing things were created by God is a fact that is clearly taught both in the Old and the New Testament.

The Book of Genesis begins thus: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." The words "in the beginning" mean "before anything else existed except God." Hence the word "create" must be taken in its strict sense and not as merely meaning to give a new shape to things already existing. All through the Bible God is repeatedly referred to as the creator of all things, as, for example, "The Lord made heaven and earth and the sea and all things that are in them" (Exod. XX, 11). "Thine are the heavens and thine is the earth. . . . the earth and the sea thou hast created" (Ps. LXXXVIII, 12). "I am the Lord that make all things, that alone stretch out the heavens, that establish the earth" (Is. XIV, 24). And then the New Testament, "All things were made by him and without him was made nothing that was made" (John I, 3).

The creation of the world in the strict sense is taught by the Church in her earliest creeds and professions of faith. Her teaching is summed up in the Vatican Council by the words which had been used exactly the same by the Fourth Lateran Council more than five and a half centuries before. "In the beginning of time He made both sorts of creatures out of nothing, the spiritual and the corporeal, that is to say the world and the angels, and then He made man a creature like to both of the former since he was composed of both body and soul" (Sess. III, Ch. 1.).

Vatican Council

The precise nature of the act of creation is in a certain true sense above the reach of human reason. We can find no approach to it in the actions in the world about us. Every cause no matter how powerful needs some pre-existing matter in order to produce anything. No cause in nature or in the power of man to invent and assemble can make something out of nothing. But we can show by our unaided reason the inevitable need of creation to account for the existence of the world about us and of ourselves. We have seen how a necessary being is one that has the reason for its existence in itself. A contingent being is one that has not the reason for its existence in itself and so must account for its existence by some other being from which it has received its existence. Now all beings must be either contingent or necessary. There is no third kind of being possible. But we have shown that there can be only one necessary being (or God) and therefore all other beings owe their existence to God. Now God must have made all things either out of Himself or out of nothing. But He could not have made them out of Himself. Such a making would produce a change in God. Moreover the substance of things is limited and changeable as we know from observation; whereas the divine substance is infinite and unchangeable. God, then, must have made all things out of nothing.

Creation a mystery but a necessary conclusion

Proof from reason

The act of creation requires an infinite being. This is taught by the greater number of theologians and seems to

Creation requires an infinite being

follow from the nature of creation. For whenever we give a thing existence we merely produce a change in something that already exists, either in ourselves, as when we think or breathe or walk, or in something else, as when we give it a new motion or shape or a new consistency. In every case the thing which is acquired by the change existed in some way either in the thing before it was changed or in the cause that produced the change. This is not creation. Moreover the change which we bring about in a thing will be more difficult according as the thing which we change is further removed from the thing into which we would change it. It is harder to make a house out of air than out of stone; and it is harder to build out of stone according as the stone is harder to quarry and must be carried and lifted a greater distance. But there is an infinite distance between something and absolute nothingness. Hence it takes an infinite power to bridge, so to speak, such a distance. This is the argument of the great theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas (Summ. Theol. I, q. 45, art. 5).

Creature could not be the instrument of creation

From this argument it follows that no creature could be endowed by God with the power to create or even be made the instrument of creation. We take "instrument" here in the strict physical sense as a hammer is used to drive a nail. It is quite evident that a creature could be the moral instrument of creation, as for example when a holy man obtains from God by his prayers the working of a miracle which involves creation, e.g., the changing of a rod into a serpent. In this case all the power comes from God. We have said that not all theologians assent to this doctrine. Even, however, if it were not true, and if a creature could be given the power to create, the power in question would have to be received from God as every other power possessed by a contingent being.

Creation was a free act

The next point about the creation is that it was a free act of God, that God was in no way forced to create, as some philosophers called Fatalists would have us think.

The Scriptures are clear on this point. The Psalmist says,

"Our God . . . hath done all things whatsoever he would" (Ps. CIII, 3, 2nd. part), and Saint Paul to the Ephesians, "(God) who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will" (Ephes. I, 11). **Scripture**

The Vatican Council teaches that, "The one true God by His most free design" (Sess. III, Ch. 1) created the world. And the Council of Florence, "(God) at what time He wished brought into being all creatures" (Decret. pro Jac., D. 706). **Vatican Council**

The reasoning in proof of God's liberty in creating the world rests on what we have already established in former chapters. For if God were forced to create the world it would have to be from something within Himself. It could only be because something within Him needs completion and He would not be, as He is, complete and infinite in Himself, distinct from the world. Moreover, as we have seen, the creation of the world can bring to God nothing that He did not already possess in an eminent degree. So God was in the fullest sense free when He created the world. He was also free in the choice of this particular world. He could have chosen from an indefinite number of others. **Reason** **God was free in His choice of this world**

Scripture and Tradition are clear also on the fact that the creation of the world was not from eternity but took place in time, or rather at the beginning of time, since time is the measure of the duration of finite existences and so begins with the creation of the first finite being.

Christ Our Lord speaks of the glory which He had "*before the world was,*" and Saint Paul calls on us to bless God because we have been the object of His eternal choice (i.e., that we were in the mind of God) "before the foundation of the world" (Ephes. I, 4). **Proof from Scripture**

The proof from reason of the beginning of the world in time is not easy because it can only be established by proving the impossibility of eternal creation. Would it have been possible for God to create a world from all eternity? A great number of the Fathers who were the ancient thinkers of the Church answered "no" to this question. Saint Athanasius **Reason**

Argument of St. Athanasius

said, and his argument should be carefully pondered, "How could those things which did not exist before they were made, exist simultaneously with God, Who always is?" In other words, "how could things which have to be *given* existence have that existence always, just like the One Being Who does not have to be given existence since He has it of Himself?" Saint Basil says that to call creatures eternal is "madness."

The argument must proceed from the definition of eternity. Eternity is duration without beginning and without end. But the eternity of God is something more than this. God's duration includes all the past and all the future *all at once*. God does not come down the years paying out His duration step by step, as it were, as created things must do. There is no succession in God because succession is a kind of change and He is, as we saw, unchangeable. It is clear that the world cannot have an eternity like God's, because the world has the future yet to live through. It has an eternal journey ahead of it if it is to remain in existence, a journey which note well, *it can never finish*. But could it not have an eternity *behind* it? No; for that would be to complete an endless journey step by step. This is a flat repugnance.

God's duration is simultaneous

Perhaps the best, because it is the simplest, argument against the possibility of a world from eternity is the same as that which is used to show that neither this world nor any other could be the best possible. God could not exhaust His omnipotence by communicating His infinity to a creature. He could not create a world so perfect that He could not make a yet more perfect one. And so He could not make a world so early that He could not make a yet earlier one.

Eternity is an infinite quality

Aquinas hesitates at this argument. But this is probably because of his reverence for the very idea of eternity which so far outreaches the capacity of our minds that we cannot talk with finality about it, even about its possibility or its impossibility. There is much truth in this.

View of Aquinas

Saint Paul says in his letter to the Hebrews that God is "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. I, 3).

and again in another place that "by him all things consist" (Col. I, 17), and once more that "in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts XVII, 28). This is not the language of exaggeration but of exact truth. It gives what we might call the fulfilling touch of the teaching on creation. It is the truth that God has not only made all things but that He keeps them in existence. This is the doctrine of the divine conservation which is insinuated also in that passage which we have seen in the Vatican Council where it says, "All things which God has established (in existence) He watches over and governs by His providence."

Divine conservation

The need of conservation can be shown from human reason. The argument which we give is that of Saint Thomas Aquinas which is accepted by all theologians and, though it may not be strictly revealed, is yet the safe and sure teaching of the Church.

Created being needs conservation

We saw that a being that is not necessary has not the reason for its existence in itself. Now when such a being is created it does not become a necessary being. It retains its dependence. It could, as far as itself is concerned, cease to exist at any time. If this were not so, then, once a thing were created it would become in a sense independent of God, just as a stone, once it leaves our hands is in no way subject to our control. This would be to impose a limit on God's omnipotence and so on His infinite perfection. Just as the reality of all things is eminently found in God's essence, so the existence of all things is constantly owing to the influence of God's infinite power. This influence is nothing else than the efficacious will of God that the things which He has created shall continue in existence. It is not merely a permissive or negative will, as for instance when I say that a certain building stands by my will because I who could destroy it do not do so. God's conserving will is, as Saint Thomas tells us, the persistence or the keeping on of the act of creation.

Conservation is the divine will

If this conserving power were once withdrawn from any

Annihilation

creature, the creature would fall back into nothingness or be annihilated. Annihilation is a purely negative result and so could not be caused by the *positive* action of any cause whatever, either human or divine. Hence it follows that no creature nor any created force can annihilate. This is proved by a stronger argument than the one which proves that a creature could not create. For annihilation is nothing else than the withdrawal of the divine support from a being. This support cannot be under the control of any creature (St. Thom., Summa Theol., Part I, q. 104, a. 1.).

Divine concurrence

The last point in the doctrine of creation is the doctrine of the divine concurrence, that is, the need that every creature has that God should concur or act with every action of the creature. This is naturally included in the doctrine of the divine conservation. It is the universal teaching of theologians * and can be proved from the same Scripture texts that we just quoted, especially the words of Saint Paul, "In him we live and move ——" and his other words in the same discourse to the Athenians, "Seeing it is he who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts XVII, 25).

Follows from dependence of a creature

The need of God's concurrence follows from the same reasoning which proves His conservation. For if a creature could act without God's concurrence, this action would be independent of God, and the creature's dependence would not be complete. The divine concurrence considered in its principle is like creation, and conservation the divine will by which He constantly and efficaciously wills that creatures should act according to their nature. If God withheld His concurrence the creature would be incapable of action. The way in which God concurs with the free actions of creatures requires special consideration and will be dealt with in the treatise on grace. It is enough to say here that God wishes necessary causes to act necessarily and for their actions He is responsible. On the other hand He wishes free causes to act freely; but for their free choice He is not responsible.

God concurs according to the nature of the created cause

* St. Thomas, place before cited: in II Sent. d. 1. q. 1. a. 4. Suarez, Metaph. disp. 22, sect. 1, n. 6.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How does creation differ from ordinary production?
2. Why is creation a mystery?
3. Prove the need of creation from reason.
4. Why does creation require an infinite being?
5. Prove from the teaching of the Church and from reason that creation was a free act of God.
6. What is revealed about the time of creation?
7. How does God's duration differ from the duration of a creature?
8. Define the divine conservation and prove from Scripture.
9. Why is it that no possible force could annihilate?
10. What is God's concurrence and how does it vary according to the nature of the cause with which it concurs?

CHAPTER VIII

THE MANNER OF THE WORLD'S CREATION

Three possible ways of creating

The world was made from nothing solely by the power of God. So much is clearly established by revelation and by reason as well. But the question comes as to how it was made: whether all at once with sea and land and rivers and mountains, with fishes in the water and beasts on the land, the sun and moon and the stars overhead and mankind in the midst thereof; or whether, on the other hand, God stooped, as it were, again and again over His work, repeatedly using His creative power until the whole universe was fully equipped for its journey through time. And there is a third supposition different from the other two. Did God create in the beginning merely the mass of the world and in it plant the seeds of all that should ever be found there later on? Did he merely create the energies which, with His ordinary concurrence (which all the actions of creatures must have), are responsible for the world of today with all that is in it?

Possible, with one proviso

Are all of these three ways of making the world in themselves absolutely possible, irrespective of what God has told us or of what the world itself gives evidence? If we make one exception of the soul of man, we can call all those three ways absolutely possible. What we mean is that the soul of man could not be the result of material energies, even if those energies had been created by God.

Which way was used?

Is there no way of knowing in which of those three ways the world actually was made?

Some look to revelation for answer

The first answer, which is that of simple uninquiring minds, is that no one can answer except God. And these same minds add that God has answered the question in detail. He has told us the number of days the creation took and exactly what

was made on each day. This is an extreme answer and is some distance from the truth. Though it might not seem so at first, God has left a great deal unrevealed as to the manner of the world's creation.

But on the other hand there is another answer which is the other extreme from the first and which is just as far if not further away from the truth. It is the answer that God has told us nothing and that science can tell us everything about the manner of the world's creation. For there is much that science can only conjecture about vaguely. And to make a mere conjecture of science do the part of a surely verified truth is to wantonly deceive. Let us see then what Scripture and science can tell us.

Some look to science alone

The first chapter of the Book of Genesis tells us how in the beginning God created heaven and earth, then how on six successive days He saw to the full development and furnishing of the earth down to man and woman on the sixth day and then He rested. The ordinary reading of this would seem to be that for six days God carried on a strictly divine work, that is, a work which requires His own peculiar efficiency which no creature can exercise. This is the interpretation followed by many Bible readers both learned and unlearned. No one can say that such a way of creating the world would have been impossible or even hard for the divine omnipotence. He could have made all things in an instant of time, and did not even have to spend days in producing any effect that He pleased.

Answer of Scripture

Six days?

There are two reasons against such an opinion as to the manner of the world's creation. The first is that we cannot fairly deduce this answer from the narrative of Genesis. This at once deprives our position of any divine authority and leaves it a mere pious conjecture.

Scripture does not say this

First, as to the meaning of the word "day" there is no certainty that it means a period of twenty-four hours such as is marked by the rotation of the earth in the light of the sun. There was no sun in the beginning to help in this

Meaning of "day"

marking. Moreover the Hebrew word for day is used in other places in Scripture to mean "a period of time," just as we say "the day of sailing-vessels is past." Again, the text says, "He rested on the seventh day," that is, He gave over His special interposition in the formation of the world. But this refraining of God from the work of establishing the world has lasted down until the present. And so if each day indicates the amount of time spent in action or pause from action we could fairly deduce that each of the days represents considerably more than twenty-four hours. We have in support of this interpretation of the term "day" as not meaning a terrestrial day the opinion of many teachers of Scripture beginning with Saint Augustine. He thought that the "days" signify divisions not in the *time* of the creation but in the *revelation* of the creation made directly or indirectly to man. Akin to this is the Vision Theory according to which the six days of creation are six visions given to Adam or to Moses the author of the Book of Genesis. These theories are not forced on our belief by the Church but they are allowed by the Church and this is the surest proof that the "day" of creation, meaning twenty-four hours, is not part of the explicit revelation of God.

St. Augustine

Vision Theory

This is made clear in a letter of Pius X in which he says, "And although He (God) could have completed the great work (i.e., of establishing the world) in a single instant, He willed to expend on it six periods of time which the Holy Scripture calls 'days'" (Tipographia Vat., anno 1905, p. 355).*

Pius X

Next, the sequence of creation is by no means clearly revealed in the sacred text. That is to say, God by no means clearly tells us that the first things in the world came in the order in which the "days" follow each other. This would follow from the allowance of the Vision Theory. For if the "days" merely represent visions of what God did, we can

Sequence of creation

* This is by no means a declaration of the certain meaning of the Scripture. But is the exposition of a safe opinion and the sign of the absence of anything like revelation to the contrary.

hold that the things shown in the visions happened in any order whatever *unless it is otherwise stated.* The Church teaches nothing to the contrary in this case. A noted theologian writes as follows:

"The sacred writer (i.e., of Genesis) indicates that the periods (i.e., the 'days' of the creation account) are not arranged in order of time but as they impressed themselves on the beholder *(idealiter).* For he speaks first of the solar light and then of the body of the sun; first of the division of day and night and then of the luminaries which make this division; first of the growing plants and the fruit-bearing trees, then of the rays of the sun without which plants cannot exist . . . Just as Matthew (i.e., in his Gospel) did not arrange the doings of Christ in the order of their actual occurrence but in the order of dogmatic importance or ideally *(idealiter),* so does Moses tell the story of the creation of the world." *

May depend on the choice of the human narrator

Next, it is not clear from the sacred text that God used His creative power in the days that followed the first day until we come to the sixth or last day. An examination of the verses themselves makes this clear.

May have been but one creation till the sixth day

In the first verse it is written that He created heaven and earth. In the third verse we read, "And God said: Be light made. And light was made." The light may have come in due time from energy and the virtue of combustion which God had inserted in the matter which, together with the energy, He had made out of nothing. Then after speaking of the ordering of the great lifeless universe, which ordering may mean nothing more than development by the powers which the creator had made in the beginning without any new interposition on His part, the account goes on in the eleventh verse, "Let the earth bring forth the green herb and such as may seed. . . ." There is no mention here of strict creation, but only of the springing up of things of which the seeds may have been planted by the divine hand. Saint

God may have let the created forces accomplish the changes

* Hetzenauer, Comment. in Libr. Gen., pp. 40, 41.

May have been interposition without new creation

Augustine, fifteen hundred years ago and Saint Thomas Aquinas eight centuries later both dealt with this part of the Scripture narrative. They both seem to demand some kind of special influence from God though not the exercise of His creative power which He exercised only in the beginning. They neither of them insist on the certainty of their teaching and we are free to receive or to reject it.

Two things to be remembered

Two things, however, must be borne in mind as sure beyond question. First, that all these actions of natural forces required, as we have said before, the divine concurrence. Nothing can act unless God acts with it. Secondly, God could not do anything which is in itself contradictory, just as He could not make two and two equal to five. He could not, therefore, cause the matter of the world to bring forth what was not contained in it. So that if the earth which He had created did not contain the seed or the virtue of life in some way, then the beginning of life was due to some special action of God then and there.

Scripture leaves the question open

But does not the text of Scripture decide for us whether God created life in germ in the beginning or by a second creation later on? No; the text of Scripture does not decide that for us, nor does the voice of the Church, nor the unanimous interpretation of the Fathers enlighten us. All that we can gather from the account of the *first five days* of creation is that God strictly *created* in the beginning. The account of what He further "made" can be held to mean that He merely presided with complaisance over the working of the forces that He had set in motion.

Science can aid in the answer

But there is a way in which we can find enlightenment in what we are speaking of and that is through the natural sciences or from those discoveries which man has made by the use of his natural reason. It might seem strange, at first, that God's revelation should find any supplementing from wisdom that is so far below His. But if we consider, we shall see that this is not so. Whatever natural reason finds out can be called in a true sense a message from God, Who gave

man his reason. Truths naturally discovered are not from God in the same special way as those which He has revealed; but one set of truths cannot contradict the other. "We have no reason to suppose," says Newman, "that He forbids lawful knowledge of any kind, and we cannot imagine that He would promulgate by His inspired servants doctrines which contradict previous truths which He has written on the face of nature." *

Cardinal Newman

Let us take an example of what we mean. The science of geology finds on the surface of the earth, especially in certain parallel scratchings on rocks, evidence that all the land was once covered by an immense mass of ice. The geologists can calculate within some degree of accuracy the great number of years that it took this mass of ice to carve its record on the land and then to melt away. This demands for the earth a considerably greater age than was once thought. Are we to answer that all this discovery is worth nothing, that God could have put those scratchings, etc., on the rocks by His own special action which is bound by no physical law whatever? No; we should accept the discoveries of geology unless, of course, we have explicit revelation to the contrary.

Example from geology

The Church is clear on this point. Natural science is the study of natural causes. There were once some philosophers who taught that there is no such thing as natural causes, that all things were caused by God alone Who would admit no associate causes to do things with Him. These men were called Occasionalists. Their teachings were soon condemned by the Church in the following decree of Pope Clement VI in 1346. These are some of the condemned propositions: "That we cannot know with evidence that there can be any other cause than God of any effect; that any cause which is not God can bring anything about; that there is or can be any natural efficient cause" (D. 559).

Occasionalism

It should be clear that if there were no natural causes in the world, then all the natural sciences would be useless.

* Oxford University Sermons, p. 5.

The above, then, is a fair defense by the Church of the natural sciences.

Pope Leo XIII in his Bull *Providentissimus Deus* gives us the mind of the Church as follows, "The sacred writers had no intention of teaching men those things—I mean the intimate make-up of visible things—which will profit nothing for their salvation. . . ." (D. 1947).

Leo XIII

St. Thomas Aquinas contributes a wise advice: "In questions of this sort (i.e., where nothing is clearly revealed in the text of Scripture), two things are to be observed: first, that we hold by all means the truth of Scripture unshaken, secondly, that when the divine Scripture can be explained in many ways no man should cling to any explanation so closely that he will keep on maintaining it even though it should be established by the clearest reason that what he believed to be taught by Scripture is false. The reason for avoiding this is that the Scripture may not on this account be laughed at by unbelievers and that the path of faith may not be closed to them" (Summ., I, q. 68, art. 1.).

St. Thomas

The conclusion which we draw from all this is that we may use the natural sciences in clearing up the facts of Scripture. If someone asks why God does not reveal all the scientific facts connected with His message, that the earth goes round the sun, for instance, the answer is that His message deals with what concerns our salvation. Other things are only accidental or by the way.* It is revealed in the Gospel story that Our Lord's Mother and Saint Joseph made a journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in order that the ancient prophecies might be fulfilled. As to how many roads there were or which one they most likely took is left to historians to determine.

Why does not God reveal all?

Apply now the natural sciences to the narrative of creation. Astronomy has propounded a theory which is substantially

* We must be careful not to fall into the error of thinking that details of the Scripture narrative which *seem* to have no connection with salvation are not revealed. What is *clearly* stated there is revealed.

received by scientists, that the earliest form of the matter of the universe was one of molten heat; that the suns in the course of many ages were consolidated and our planet broke away from our sun and settled down to the process of cooling which took many ages more. In the light of this we say that our earth took very much more than six days to reach its present form. We say also that the first "day" mentioned in the narrative of Genesis was not the first in the world's history since there are "waters" mentioned which could not have come till the earth was well cooled.

Astronomy

Geology shows the natural forces which were responsible for the earth's present shape and demands a very long time for their functioning.

Geology

Paleontology proves that the surface of the earth kept changing long after the coming of living things, since fossils of plants and animals are dug up from the bosom of the earth where they have lain for thousands of years.

Paleontology

As to the much disputed question as to whether the material forces of the world could produce life, we leave this to be discussed in the next chapter on evolution. It is enough to say here that the narrative of Genesis leaves this unsolved. We can hold, as the ancient Christian philosophers held, that the light of the sun by some vitalizing power which it possessed, could generate life from dead matter. We can hold, moreover, that the germs or eggs of all the life of the first five days of creation were created in matter in the beginning, and hatched forthwith by natural causes. This may not be a scientific opinion but it is not opposed to the Scripture.

Origin of life

But when we come to the sixth day of the creation account, all is changed. There we have a plainness that was absent before. The very vagueness of the other days' account throws into strong relief what follows and puts the facts narrated above all conjectures of science. We are referring to the creation of man and woman.

Revelation is clear on the sixth day

Genesis

"And he (God) said: let us make man to our own image and likeness. . . . And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them" (Gen. I, 26, 27).

"And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth; and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. II, 7). Then the sacred narrative goes on to tell in a later verse of the formation of woman from the rib of man (Gen. II, 21, 22).

Production of man's soul and body

It must be noticed that there is question of two things here, namely of the production of both the body and the soul of man. As to the soul of man, that principle which makes man a spiritual being, and by far the most like to God of all the visible world, only false science can question the need of a special action on the part of God to produce it. The Church's Tradition is most explicit on the fact of the soul's creation. But we shall deal with this as well as with the arguments from reason in the chapter in which we treat of the nature and origin of the soul. Our concern now is with the body of man.

How was man's body prepared?

Did God merely allow the material forces which He had created to prepare the body of man until the day when He would breathe into the thing so prepared the breath of life which is a spiritual soul? Or, on the contrary, did God by a special act take matter which was in no way prepared, and prepare it Himself for the reception of a soul and then infuse a soul into it? The plain reading of the texts of Scripture which we have just given is against the first answer and in favor of the second.

Notice that He said before making man, "Let us make man." He said this before the making of nothing else. Notice again that He says, "To our own image and likeness." This implies that man would possess a likeness to God such as was possessed by nothing else that was yet in existence. All the things that He had made possessed some likeness to

Him since, as we shall see further on, He could not make them according to any other model. But now something was coming which would require a special endowment from Him. And this endowment would, naturally, be found in the whole man, that is, both in the body and in the soul. Again the Scripture says, "Male and female he created them." Therefore, the difference between the human sexes which is largely a difference of body was the result of God's special action.

Scripture answers

Finally, the account says, "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life and man became a living soul." Here we have a description of two actions, the first not a creative one by which man's body was prepared from matter already existing, the second a purely creative one since it produced what in no way existed before. Then we have the result, man, a complete being. The Scripture does not say as it says of the making of the plants and the fishes "Let the earth or the sea bring forth the body of man," but, "The Lord God formed (the body of man) of the slime of the earth." Neither does the Scripture say that God breathed into plants and animals the breath of life. Yet He could have done this, and perhaps He did, since plants and animals possess a soul (or principle of life according to their degree). Why is this left vague? We do not know. But one effect of the vagueness of that part of the account is to emphasize the clearness of the account about man that follows—of what God did for man's body and for his soul.

Slime of the earth

Lastly, consider the material which God took to make the body of man. There could hardly be found anything more unprepared to receive a soul or more in need of special preparation on the part of God. The question is sometimes asked whether the preparation of man's body could not have been spread over a long period of time. This is a useless and foolish supposition. For since the preparation of man's and of woman's body was not due to the slow-moving action of natural causes, but to the special action of God, it is only

Was the process instantaneous?

reasonable to say that the work in both cases was instantaneous.*

Where the Scripture is ever so plain it is still always true that the written word needs a teacher. Hence, we must consult the understanding of the living Church on the revelation which we have just quoted.

Teaching of the Church

The teaching of the Fathers and theologians of the Church predominantly tends to regard as a revealed truth the formation of the first man's body by direct action of God. Many consider the opposite opinion heresy; but all are not positive on this. Still the denial of this doctrine would be dangerous and unadmissible. Here is the testimony of some of the Fathers:

Fathers

St. Irenaeus (ab. 120): "God took slime from the earth and formed man. It is indeed a much harder thing and much more difficult to believe (that God) made man up into bones and nerves and veins . . . than that He raises man up again from the dead" (Adv. Haer., L. 5, c. 3).

Origen (185): "The soul is made but the body is formed" (In Ps. 118, 73; apud Pitra, Anal. Sacr. III).

St. Gregory of Nyssa (ab. 300): "If it had simply been written, 'He made (man),' you might think that man was made as the beasts, as the whales, as the plants, as the trees. Therefore, that you may know that you have nothing in common with the lower forms of life Moses set forth the particular and unusual method of God in creating you" (Orat. 2, in hominis procreat. 1).

St. John Chrysostom (347): "He deigns to form our body with His own hand" (De hominis structura, Orat. 2, n. 1).

Tertullian (ab. 160): "Thou (O man!) hast both slime made glorious by the hand of God and flesh made more glorious by the breath of God" (De resurrect. carnis, ch. 6, 7).

St. Augustine (354): "For although God formed man of

* Saint Thomas thinks that the body of Eve was formed by the conversion of other matter besides the rib of Adam. This matter was probably the slime of the earth such as Adam's body was made of. The Scripture says that God "*built* the rib into a woman."

the dust of the earth, that same earth and all earthly material comes from nothing; and when man was made He gave to his body a soul made from nothing'' (De Civ. Dei, L. 14, c. 11, n. 1).

The solution not yet made the object of a definition

The mind of the Church in this matter has not yet been made the subject of a precise definition. But the explicit tendency of her teaching has been made abundantly clear. No one would be allowed to teach publicly that the body of man was not formed by the special action of God. Writers (whose names need not be mentioned) who have made such statements have been bidden by the Church to withdraw them. In some cases their writings have been suppressed.

Biblical Commission

We have an answer of the Biblical Commission, which body represents the official teaching of the Church though not its infallible authority. It goes as follows:

First comes a question *(quaesitum)* sent to the Commission. ''Whether, to take a specific case, the literal historic sense of the first three chapters of Genesis can be doubted where there is question of facts narrated in those same chapters which touch on the foundations of the Christian Religion, such as, among others, the peculiar creation of man, the formation of the first woman from the first man . . .'' The answer given to this was, ''No.''

Council of Cologne

The words of the Council of Cologne (1860) deal with this matter most explicitly. This was not an Ecumenical Council but represented much of the Church's learning.

''Our first parents were immediately created by God. And hence we declare as plainly contrary to Holy Scripture and to Faith the opinion of those who are bold enough to assert that man, if you consider precisely his body, has passed by the spontaneous change of an imperfect nature into a more perfect one and finally into this human nature (which he wears)'' (Coll. Lac., t. s., col. 292).

What has science to say?

We might ask what authentic science has to say about the preparation of the body of man for the advent of his spiritual soul. Does science find any evidence of such a preparation

or find in the world material forces equal to this? This question will be answered in the following chapter.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What are the three ways in which creation could have been accomplished?
2. How much does Scripture tell us accurately about the method of creation?
3. What is the meaning of the "day" in the account of Genesis?
4. Why could not God have created forces in the beginning capable of producing the human soul?
5. How is science able to help in questions concerning creation?
6. Why does not the Scripture teach science?
7. What is Occasionalism and why condemned?
8. What is taught us by astronomy?
9. What is taught us by geology and paleontology?
10. What is the teaching of the Biblical Commission on the original formation of the body of man?

CHAPTER IX

A DISCUSSION OF EVOLUTION

Evolution means an "unfolding" and in its broadest sense means the development of the visible world under the influence of natural forces or causes. Applied to the history of mankind Evolution claims to find out and to classify the influences that have shaped civilization and nations. Applied to astronomy it describes the development of the planets of the solar system including our own earth. It does this by the aid of wonderful instruments which determine the consistency of the planets, some of which are thus judged to be younger and some older than our own.

Evolution in its broadest sense

But the principal field in which the theory of Evolution has been active, so that the name generally means this, is the field of material living beings, the plant and animal world. We take Evolution to mean, then, some theory which accounts by natural causes for the likenesses and the differences we find among living beings, both plants and animals, together with the changes of the same.

In its narrower sense

Evolution is not an entirely modern theory. Many of the ancient Greek philosophers taught the development (or evolution) of all material things from some original substance. And Saint Augustine, as we have seen, taught that the forms of life developed from primeval seeds *(rationes seminales)* placed in the original matter by the Creator. It is not clear whether or how far Augustine's theory required special assistance from the Creator in the first stages of this development. His theory was a matter of free discussion among the Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages. This makes it clear that the Church found nothing offensive to her revelation in the teaching. Augustine is one of the pillars of the

Found in ancient teachers

St. Augustine

Church's Tradition. Very many modern Evolutionists consider Saint Augustine as their forerunner and ancient protagonist.

Modern prevalence of Evolution

But there is no comparison between the prevalence of evolutionary theories in modern times and in ancient. The inventing of new instruments and the discovery of countless new means of investigation; the birth of new sciences such as geology, paleontology and chemistry; the marvellous amount of industry which has been exercised in experimenting and in cataloguing experiments; all these things have crowded the scientific horizon so that it is not too much to say that by far the greater number of scientific men today think in terms of Evolution.

Darwin

The general endeavor of evolutionary scientists is to discover the causes and the laws for the changes in the organisms of living beings both vegetable and animal. One of the first great scientists, whose name is almost synonymous with the system is Charles Darwin (1809-1882). He held that the development and improvement of living things is mainly due to the mating of the stronger and fitter members of a species, so that the weaker ones die off and the race, of plants or brutes, goes on improving. Darwin himself modified his theory at different times. It is considered by Evolutionists today as only a very incomplete explanation. Others have shown that environment is an important factor in development and change. Others have shown that there are jumps *(saltus)* in which changes occur not traceable to the parents; others that ancestral characteristics reappear according to some kind of law. But the total yield of Evolutionists' investigation and experiment is unsatisfactory. They would find all the causes for the changes in living organisms and the extent of these changes from the beginning. This end seems very far away as yet on account of the contradictory answers of the leaders of different schools. But evolutionary study has undoubtedly opened up a most fertile field of human

Factors of Evolution

No final solution

learning that, it may well be, the life of mankind will never see exhausted.

Antagonism of Church and Evolution

What is the reason of the antagonism between Evolution and Religions? That there is such an antagonism in the opinion of men does not admit of a doubt. First hear the side of the scientists.

Scorn of Evolutionists for religion

A prominent Evolutionist, after exalting the glories and the triumphs of Evolution adds the following: ". . . the supporters of religious tradition have made broad their phylacteries to write on them the new words."* (This means that religious teachers who are hypocrites at heart, like the Pharisees who wore phylacteries, acknowledge the overwhelming truths of Evolution only because they are forced to do so.) This contemptuous way of speaking of religion is by no means uncommon among men of this school. Some, like Haeckel, go as far as to ridicule religious beliefs with what seems to be wanton malice.

The Church's attitude toward science

It is all most unfair. The Church receives the discoveries of evolutionary science, as she receives those in astronomy and mathematics, with an absolutely neutral mind. The Church is the official keeper of revelation and of the rules of Christian life—no more. If it be asked why God has not revealed some of the copious discoveries of modern science, the answer is that such would be entirely foreign to the purpose of revelation, which is man's salvation, as we have shown before.† It is well known that Catholic scientists like Mivart and Mendel, the second of whom was an Augustinian priest, have made very important contributions to evolutionary thought.

Reason for the Church's opposition

There is, however, a ground for opposition on the Church's part to the Evolutionary School, broadly so called. It is on account of the recklessness of so large a number of evolutionary scholars with regard to certain fundamental principles.

* P. F. Mitchell, "Evolution" in *Encyclopedia Britannica.*

† Sometimes, undoubtedly, Catholics are guilty of a mistaken zeal as well as ignorance. In the classical case of Galileo the Roman Cardinals were undoubtedly wrong for trying to teach science from the Bible. Galileo himself, however, was not without blame.

And the neglect of these principles strikes at the foundations of religion as well.

Principle of causality

The first principle which they neglect is the principle of causality, that is, the principle not only that everything must have a cause but that there cannot be in the effect the least bit more than there is in the cause. And so when they talk, like Spencer and his followers, of all things, including the human soul and thought, evolving out of blind motion that started no one knows when or how, they argue in a way that would disgrace the merest child. Few children believe that a magician really picks money out of the empty air or hauls rabbit after rabbit out of an ordinary hat. But this would be a much milder piece of credulity than to believe that this great ordered world could come out of a great black empty hole *by its own power*. Quite naturally the Church is concerned at this for it plainly does away with the need of God.

The world has a designer

The second principle which very many Evolutionists either neglect or deliberately deny is the need of design wherever there is an ordered effect. This is really only another application of the principle of causality which we stated above. For if there is evidence of design in a work and we deny that there was any design in the cause, or that there was any designer, we are finding more in the effect than there was in the cause. The case of Darwin is only typical of many others. At first he acknowledges the need of a design and a designer in all the structures and structural changes in living things but later on he says, "The old argument fails, now that the law of Natural Selection has been discovered (Autobiography, publ. 1876)." This seems from the context to mean nothing else than that since he has found out a law, or a regular way in which things act in the world of natural living causes, there is nothing further to seek; there is no reason for their acting in that regular way. They just do it and that is all. This is so common a way for Evolutionists to talk that it merits the consideration of a special paragraph.

A law is not the last explanation

Suppose we found on the face of a great flat rock thou-

sands of little marks arranged in horizontal lines. Some of the marks are curved, some straight, some are circles, some squares. Now the very fact that they were arranged in lines one under the other would make you hesitate to say that they were made there by some chance cause without the least design. But now suppose that someone came to you and showed you a language key by which you were able to make out that the markings were an intelligible bit of actual history, a battle of one of the Chaldean kings or something of the sort. You say to your informant, "Some intelligent being has evidently written this here." "No," he answers, "there is no evidence of that." "No evidence of that! And yet you have shown me plainly that the presence of every mark there is part of an intelligent purpose to express a thought, and the thought expressed agrees with some account that I have elsewhere read so that I know that it is true. Yet you still say that there is no design?"

Chance cannot give design

"No design," he answers, "only a law. I have found out the rule according to which every one of those marks finds its place there. It is all in that language key there."

"But a rule requires a ruler and a law requires a lawmaker. Otherwise all those marks there could be the effect of chance. They just *chance* to make sense and the sense just *chances* to agree with some facts otherwise known." To resist conviction by this argument is a deliberate silencing of reason. It is also destructive of religion and of the moral life of the world because it completely does away with God. To say that the cause of all things is blind unthinking chance is just as bad as to say that all things have no ultimate cause at all.

Blindness of Evolutionists

The only way to explain this blindness of the Evolutionists to the above argument, if they are indeed honest men, is by saying that their eyes are filled with what is immediately before them and they see no more.* Their tireless and often bril-

* The Evolutionists sometimes ask us by way of retort to our argument, what that writing on the face of nature spells to us. We answer by the one word, "God." Saint Francis of Assisi used to say that the flowers shouted the name of God so loud to him that his thoughts were interrupted. It is quite the opposite with the Evolutionists.

liant explorations into the fields of nature reaching back into the past and renewed with every instant of the present blind them to the existence of everything else except precisely what they have found. "Here is another set of facts," they cry, "here is what looks like a law. Here is a sure law." That is all they see. Saint Paul has a wonderful passage which sounds like an accusation of some of these same men. "For the invisible things of him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also and divinity: so that they (i.e., those who refuse to acknowledge this) are inexcusable" (Rom. I, 20).

Science must defer to revelation

The third principle that so many of the Evolutionists neglect is the truth that God can and has revealed to us some of the details of creation and that, in the presence of this revelation science and her theories must be silent. The Evolutionists hold in so many words that man with all that he is, is the result of evolution like the other species of living things. We have explicit revelation and the teaching of the Church against this in the case of man's soul and, *at least*, a strong hint of revelation in the same direction with regard to man's body.

Reason demands creation for the soul

But let us for the moment put aside revelation and see how far in the light of mere reason this position of the Evolutionists can be defended. About the origin of the human soul there is no need for argument. Anyone who thinks that his own self-conscious soul could come from any combination of material forces such as make up the plants and the brutes is nearly beyond rescue as far as argument goes. He is turning away from the testimony of his own thoughts, of his own free responsible actions. We shall show in a later chapter that material forces could not even be created by God equal to the task of producing a human soul.

This is not true by any means with regard to the body of man. Material forces could have been created by God capable of forming the body of man ready for the reception

of the soul. But here there is no question of possibility, but of what has actually happened. Did God in the beginning give a directing impulse to the material forces which He created so that without any further assistance from Him they in due time produced the body of man? We find indications in His revealed word that He did not, as we have seen. But what are the indications from science?

Body of man could have been evolved

From all honest scientists and those who are not afflicted with the mad worship (I choose the word carefully) of Evolution we have the answer that there is not the least shred of real evidence of the gradual development of man's body from the brute. There is no sign in the most ancient of brute skeletons to show that they were ever the least bit nearer to man than they are today; nor is there the least sign in the brutes of today of growing the least bit nearer to man in their structure or in their intelligence. The ape-like ancestors of man or the link that would connect the development of one into the other is a dream of the Evolutionists.

Scientific evidence to the contrary

But there is another line of argument in which the best science bears witness against the extremes of Evolution. It is as regards the origin of life. The possibility that the germs of life were sowed in the original matter of the world in the beginning is practically ruled out by the scientific doctrine, almost universally received, that the heat of the primeval matter was far too great to allow of the existence of life germs. Then the principle is just as universally received that life can only come from life. No experiment with inorganic forces has ever shown the faintest sign of being able to produce life. Science, accordingly, testifies that in the world as it is, life must have originated from a particular act of God's creation after the creation of the inorganic world, unless two and two can, by evolution, become equal to five.

Evidence against the evolution of life

The last testimony of honest conservative science is the most extraordinary. These are the words of an eminent scientist who has most carefully reviewed all the findings of

Testimony of careful science

Evolution up to the present day. *"There is no evidence in favor of an ascending evolution in organic forms. Changes* (i.e. those produced by evolution) *which extend beyond the range of variation observed in the human species have thus far not been strictly demonstrated, either experimentally or historically."* *

Only slight variations can be demonstrated

See what these two statements mean. Take the second one first. Here we are authoritatively told that all the changes which have been observed in all the forms of life for all the thousands of years that their observation covers have not amounted to more in the same type than the difference between a white man and a black man, a tall man and a short man, a man with copious red hair and one whose head is shiny and bald. So with regard to the changes which can be induced in the same type either by interbreeding or selected environment or by some of the other means which have been perfected by tireless experiment. These variations cannot be pushed into any wider radius than that which separates blue-eyed, clear-skinned long-nosed men from those with black eyes, pug noses and freckles.

No ascending evolution

But the first statement is the most astounding of all! *"There is no evidence in favor of an ascending evolution."* There is no evidence, then, that things change substantially for the better. Things change. That is clear and science has the means of seeing and noting changes that ordinary observation would never reach. But they do not evolve upwards. There is no evidence of any forces in the material world, whether they were put there by God or just found themselves there unaccountably, no forces which can push the different forms of life from less to greater. And yet Evolutionists would have us *believe*—it is a fine example of scientific faith in place of the religious faith which so many of them scorn—that protoplasms (things like jelly-fish) evolved

Scientific credulity

* Muckermann, "Evolution," *Catholic Encyclopedia*. And the eminent David Starr Jordan, of Stanford University, shows that the minute "species" of plants and animals as we now know them are, practically, *fixed*. Cf. *Science*, Nov. 13, 1925.

into apes and apes into men. Their infatuation for the magic word Evolution is like nothing so much as the untutored enthusiasms of naked savages dancing round their idol. "Look! it hath brought us the full harvest. We did not see it bring anything. No; but here is the harvest, and what else could have brought it?" *

* Not long ago there was a celebrated trial in this country in which the right of one of the States to forbid the teaching of Evolution in the schools was challenged. Many people, even religious people, thought the State was wrong, on the ground that the State should not meddle in matters of theology or philosophy. This is a most ridiculous stand to take. The State may be a clumsy theologian but she has charge of public decency. It is just as indecent for children to be taught that they are descended soul and body from apes as to teach them blasphemy or obscenity.

Note on the Dayton trial

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is the broad and what the narrow sense of Evolution?
2. What are the different explanations of the changes in living beings?
3. What is the attitude of the Church towards science?
4. What principle of truth do the Evolutionists neglect?
5. Why does the world demand a designer?
6. What discovery do the Evolutionists halt at?
7. Why is it possible for the body of man to have been evolved?
8. What scientific evidence is against the fact of this?
9. What variations are demonstrated in living forms?
10. Why are Evolutionists guilty of credulity?

CHAPTER X

THE WORLD IS A LIMITED REFLECTION OF GOD'S PERFECTION

We saw in the chapter on the attributes of God that evil is only the privation of reality, that it is nothing positive in itself. It must follow then that everything is good in its positive reality. But now we come to examine what is the model for the goodness of everything. God created the world out of nothing. But a creator like every other worker must have a model according to which he works. He cannot work in the dark with no pre-conceived object which he intends to produce. Or, if he does, what he produces will be nothing but random strokes like the scribbling of a child that has not been taught to write. God had no other model but Himself. Everything which exists outside of God is in some way a reflection of the divine essence or, in other words, of God Himself.

A creator must have a model

The model of God's creation

Scripture

The Scripture indicates the truth of this in the Book of Proverbs. The words quoted are those of the eternal wisdom of God spoken as if by a person. They are most sublime and inspiring:

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways before he made anything from the beginning. I was set up from eternity and of old before the earth was made. When he prepared the heavens I was present, when with a certain law and compass he enclosed the depths: I was with him forming all things: And my delights were to be with the children of men" (Prov. VIII, 22, 23, 27, 30, 31).

In this passage we have the representation of the divine wisdom which is nothing else than the infinite mind of God Himself, brooding, as it were, on His plan to make the

world and all that was to be in it. He shows complaisance, too, in the contemplation: "My delights were to be," etc. No one can contemplate a plan unless the elements of the plan are present to him. How could the elements of things which in no way existed as yet be present to God? Only in or through His knowledge of His own divine essence. The model, therefore, of all created things is the essence of God.

He planned the world from eternity

The Vatican Council teaches that God created "for the purpose of manifesting His perfection by the good things which He imparts to creatures . . . " Now these "good things" are all that creatures possess including their very existence. Creatures have received all things from God. But God could not give to creatures any part of Himself. That would be the teaching of Pantheism and would be contrary to the unchangeableness of God which we have already proved. What He gives to creatures, then, is in every case a reflection or imitation of His essence. Once more, then, God's essence is the model for all created things.

Could not communicate Himself to creatures

Saint Augustine, the great Father and Doctor of the Church says: "Each and every thing has been created according to its proper design. Where else must we think that these designs are except in the mind of the Creator?"

The expansion of this truth is left to the industry of human reason. Let us then apply our reason to it, guided by the theologians of the Church.

The question may be asked in the first place, why, in our ordinary contemplation of things around us, we do not see the likeness to the divine essence which is the model for them all. The answer is because we have never seen the divine essence and so cannot say in what precisely the likeness consists. But when our reason is enlightened, as it is, by faith, we can be certain that the likeness is there and we can adore God in creatures just as we offer respect and honor to a great man in his statue or his photograph. There have been many saints who, like Saint Francis whom we

Why do we not see the divine likeness?

mentioned, have been moved to raptures of adoration by the contemplation even of lifeless creatures.

No limit to God's imitability

The next point to consider is that since all creatures are imitations of the divine essence and since the divine essence is infinitely perfect, there can be no limit to the imitations of His essence which are possible. There are creatures without end and worlds without end which He could have created or which He could still create. It is at least highly probable from the sense of revelation that God never created any other universe than this and that He will never create another. It is absolutely certain that He has not created and will never create all possible worlds. This follows from what we saw in a preceding chapter, namely, that God's omnipotence can never be exhausted and that He can never create an infinitely perfect being. The conclusion which we are particularly interested in is this: since God could have created other worlds and better worlds but chose this one, this world is the object of His special choice. Moreover, since the choice of God like everything else in God is in Him from all eternity, this world must have been in His mind from all eternity.

The most perfect world an impossibility

This world the object of God's choice

There was this world in the mind of God from all eternity, the blue of the sky, the green of things that grow and the curves of the hills. "Who," says the Psalmist speaking of God, "telleth the number of the stars and calleth them by their names." (Ps. CXLVI, 4.) That is a new way in which a man can reasonably be reminded of God by creatures. These creatures which He decreed from the beginning to make, were the object also of His complaisance or delight. This follows from the idea of choice but it is also recalled to us by the words of Scripture which we quoted before: "My delights were to be with the children of men." And this last word "men" opens a new vista, as it were, in this whole consideration.

So are men

Men, that is to say the men who afterwards came into existence, were the object of God's choice from all eternity. They were in the mind of God from all eternity. Their names

were known; for without a man's name you do not perfectly individualize him and identify him. And men were there perfectly individualized and identified. Moreover, men were the object of the divine complaisance, of the divine delight. "My delights were to be with the children of men."

This leads us to the climax of this part of our discussion. If the whole material world including the very lifeless sticks and stones reflect or image in some way the perfection of God, how much more must man do this who is by far the most perfect being in the visible creation?

Man is the closest likeness of God

The Scripture teaches this plainly in the description of creation in Genesis which we read before. "Let us make man," says God, "to our own image and likeness." And theologians distinguish well in this matter by calling the likeness of God in the rest of creatures a trace or foot-print compared to the likeness of God in man which they call a true image. Other creatures point to God as their cause; man shows a likeness of God. Creatures in a general way show the perfections of God inasmuch as He must have their perfections in an infinite degree—must be infinitely wider than the sky, infinitely swifter than the wind, infinitely stronger than the rock, more lovely than the flowers and the sunset. But man gives the very lineaments of God.

Footprint and image

Consider how this is so. It is because man is a being with understanding and will. It is these two spiritual faculties which mark man as above all the visible creation and make him like to God. How, precisely, is this? Because God is truly a being who understands and wills. These two powers of knowing and willing truly denote the essence of God as they denote the essence of man. Is there any proof for this? Yes; throughout all of revelation God always represents Himself explicitly as a Being Who knows and wills, Who understands and loves. And we know the same thing from our reason alone. For we cannot possibly conceive any being with perfection which lies beyond the perfection of those two powers. By His understanding He is all-knowing and

Understanding and will found in God

all-wise, by His will He is all-powerful and all-loving. It is as infinitely knowing and loving that our reason teaches us to worship Him as one above Whom there can be no other. And our reason which we have from Him could not teach us a lie.

Likeness to God in our human faculties

Therefore, although it is perfectly true that these powers in us are the merest infinitesimal shadows of what they are in God, though it is true that they are not present in God as separate faculties, but as expressions of one simple undivided essence, that their acts are not as they are in us, trivial additions to us that come and go all the time, but in God are one simple unchanging infinite act, still it remains true that our faculties of understanding and will truly denote the divine essence whose image we, therefore, truly wear.

Image of the Trinity

Theologians go further than this and teach us that the image of the Trinity, the three Persons in one God, is found in human nature. This must be carefully understood. It does not mean that with our unaided reason without any revelation, by simply looking at these faculties in us we could come to the knowledge of the mystery of the Trinity. Such a doctrine is expressly condemned as we saw in a preceding chapter. But it means that, knowing by God's revelation and instruction that there are three Persons in Him, we can recognize the image of them in our nature. For our highest or spiritual nature is utterly expressed by two faculties which spring from it, as it were. And the procession of these two faculties with their acts from one and the same nature, together with the manner in which they proceed represent, though very imperfectly, the processions in the Trinity.

There is in addition the important fact that grave theological opinion teaches that the Son is an infinite act of knowledge and the Holy Ghost an infinite act of love. According to this the likeness is still closer, though still very imperfect.

Saint Augustine says: "It would certainly not have been rightly said (i.e., by God in Genesis) 'to our image' if man

were made to the likeness of only one Person'' (De Trin., 1.12, c. 6).

The likeness is closer from an ancient theological opinion

And Saint Peter Damian: ''Man was not created to the image of one Person but to that of the entire Trinity'' (De Fid. Cath. Opusc. 1, c. 1).

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why could the model for the creation be nothing else than the divine essence?
2. Why could not God communicate His essence to creatures?
3. Why did God choose to create this world rather than any other?
4. What is the difference in the likeness to God in man and in creatures?
5. How are creatures unlike to God?
6. How does man in a special way reflect the image of the Trinity?
7. Has God understanding and will as we have them?
8. Prove from the Scripture that God planned the world from eternity.
9. Why do we not recognize God in creatures?
10. Why is the best possible world an impossibility?

CHAPTER XI

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION

Now that we have examined the model or pattern according to which the world was created it is natural to consider the purpose or end for which the world was made.

The sense of "purpose" with regard to God

A purpose is, ordinarily, that which moves a person to act, and we must modify this idea somewhat when we speak of "purpose" as applied to God. A purpose is something which moves or persuades the will. It must therefore be distinct from the will which it influences. In the light of what we have already seen about the divine attributes, it would be against the simplicity of the divine essence that anything should exist in God distinct from anything else there. It would also be against the divine unchangeableness that anything should in the strict sense *move* God to act, since He is one pure infinite act in Himself. God cannot be acted on by a cause. And a purpose is a species of cause. It is called a "final cause."

God is not moved to act

Nor could we say, as might be suggested, that God is moved in the strict sense to act by the infinite goodness of His nature. For in this case the creation would not have been a free act. And we have already seen that God was under no necessity to create this world, or any other, nor to create at all.

There is a purpose in what He produces

Still it remains true that in a real sense God did act according to a purpose and while this purpose did not influence God as the purpose of our actions influences us, this purpose did have an influence on *the creatures that God made*. It can be found reflected in creatures just as the model according to which God created can be found reflected in creatures.

The purpose according to which God created the world

can be divided into a primary and a secondary purpose, the second of which is subordinated to the first. His primary purpose was His own extrinsic glory; His secondary purpose was the good of creatures.

Primary and secondary purpose

"Glory" is defined as "clear knowledge together with praise"; that is to say, knowledge of some excellence in a person with a corresponding acknowledgment of it. In our ordinary speech we take "praise" and "glory" for the same thing, since praise presupposes that we have found something worth praising. It only too often happens, as we know, that praise is given for no good reason and then it is false or lying praise.

Glory

Glory is divided for the better understanding of it, into "fundamental" and "formal." The first of these is the excellence itself which is acknowledged, and the second is the actual acknowledgment of it. It is divided, finally, into intrinsic (or internal) and extrinsic (or external) according as the excellence is in the owner of it or in some of his works and according as the acknowledgment of it comes from the owner of the excellence and is directed, of course, towards himself, or comes from someone else and is directed towards the owner. It should be clear at once that the only ones who can give to God *formal extrinsic* glory are rational creatures; for they alone have the power of acknowledging the excellence in another. Irrational creatures like plants and animals and stones can give God *fundamental extrinsic* glory and rational creatures can, of course, do the same.

Divisions of glory

Some theologians hold the opinion that God could not have created a world in which there were no rational creatures for then He would have nothing but fundamental extrinsic glory which would not, they say, be a sufficient end for creating. This is a doubtful opinion. But we leave the question undecided and simply hold that God's end in creating was His extrinsic glory.

A world without rational creatures

There are two last things to be noted before we proceed to the proof.

God does not need glory

The first is that we must not think of God's extrinsic glory as something which He needed or as something new which He could gain. His infinite excellence in Himself and His infinite knowledge of His excellence contained *eminently* all that could ever come to Him from creatures.

Self-glory of God

The second is a difficulty which often occurs to persons considering these truths. It seems to them that we are making God out a selfish Person since we represent Him as intending only to procure the acknowledgment of His own excellence and, moreover, as glorying in His own knowledge of His excellence. The eminent philosopher Descartes fell into this erroneous view. It is a most foolish error, for it comes from judging God by the standards which we use for a creature. For a creature to glory in his own excellence is wrong precisely because all glory belongs to God from Whom we creatures have received all that we have. But this will appear more clearly from the progress of the argument.

Proof from Scripture

The Scripture says: "For the invisible things of him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also and divinity: so that they are inexcusable. Because that when they knew God they have not glorified him as God . . . " (Rom. I, 20, 21). Here we see men called "inexcusable" because they have not given glory to God by acknowledging His excellence in creatures. Therefore God intends that His excellence be acknowledged in creatures.

"And every one that calleth upon my name I have created him for my glory, I have formed him and made him . . . " (Is. XLIII, 7).

" . . . and I (God) will not give my glory to another."

"The heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of his hands" (Ps. XVIII, 2).

The most powerful passage of all is that in which Christ

Himself expresses the purpose of His mission on earth, which purpose no one dare doubt is the most perfect model for the purpose of every rational being. "I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John XVII, 4).

Vatican Council

The Vatican Council expressly declares that God created all things "for the purpose of manifesting His perfection through the good things which are imparted to creatures." (Den. 1783). And the same Council adds, "If anyone should deny that the world was created for the glory of God, let him be anathema" (D. 1805).

The Fathers of the Church are also explicit on this doctrine:

Fathers

St. Athenagoras: "It is clear that God, if the first and greater reason is considered, was drawn to make man for His own sake and for the sake of the goodness and wisdom which shine forth in all of His works" (De Resurrect., 12).

St. Theophilus of Antioch: "God made all things . . . that His greatness might be known and acknowledged through His works" (Ad Autol. 1, 4).

St. Augustine: "It is enough for the Christian to believe that the cause for the creation of all things was nothing but the goodness of the Creator" (Enchir., c. 9).

But the expansion of this doctrine by reason guided by the teaching of theologians is most interesting.

Creator's glory necessary effect of creation

It is necessary in the first place that God when He made creatures should intend whatever followed by strict necessity from their making. To do something and not to intend what is essentially and necessarily connected with what one does is to be a careless and imperfect worker; it is to risk becoming the victim of one's own work. Such could not, clearly, be the case with God. But the manifestation of God's excellence is essentially connected with the creation of creatures. This follows from the last chapter in which we showed that God's essence or God Himself, was the model according to which all things were made, and the degree of

their perfection, which, of course, must always be limited, is greater or less according as they manifest more or less of the perfection of their pattern. All this will become clearer by an extended comparison.

Comparison of a sculptor

Consider a sculptor who carves a masterpiece. Every mark that he leaves in the stone manifests his excellence, his marvellous skill—the perfect union of hand and eye and, above all, the noble thought that takes life in the stone. There are two ways in which a sculptor is able to turn his work away from the expression only of his own excellence. One way is by making his statue the representation of some living person,

God has no model but Himself

Christ or His Mother, for instance, or even the king or queen or some great one of the land, so that those who look upon the statue will be distracted by the excellence of the person portrayed and they will not think only of the excellence of the artist. Even in this case the first thing which the statue expresses is the genius of the artist whether the artist wishes it or not. But even this manner of dividing one's glory is impossible for God to do. He cannot model His work after anyone but Himself. And so every work of His when it manifests the skill of the maker and the beauty of the pattern, manifests at the same time the excellence of the same God. Another way in which an ordinary artist could lessen

God cannot suppress His name

his glory is by forbearing to write his name on his work. Even then his work will mutely testify to his excellence though he remains unknown. This also is impossible for God. Written deep in the being of every created thing is the inscription, "Made by God." It is the expression of the thing's very essence. God Himself cannot erase it nor bid the creature be silent in what its essence is proclaiming, "made by God."

The next thing to prove is that the other end of creation subordinate to the first end is the good of the things created.

This is plainly taught with regard to all creatures by these words which declare God's love for them all, "For thou lovest all things that are and hatest none of the things

that are made; for thou didst not appoint or make anything hating it" (Wisdom XI, 25). The last part of this quotation declares plainly, though indirectly, that God made all things *because* He loved them. But to love is to desire good for another. Therefore, God made all things because He desired their good.

Secondary end the good of creatures

When it comes to the consideration of rational beings or men we find the whole of Scripture filled with the declaration of God's love for them. The plan of creation is so filled with the love of God for men that we can understand how Christian philosophers, fixing their eyes on this truth became forgetful of the truth which adjoined it and thought that God's *only* purpose in creating was to bestow His gifts upon men.

Rational creatures

"What is man," cries out the Psalmist, "that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor: and hast set him over the work of thy hands. Thou hast subjected all things under his feet" (Ps. VIII, 5-8). Then we have the testimony of Saint John, "For God so loved the world (i.e. the world of *men*) as to give his only-begotten son" (John III, 16). God cannot have second thoughts. That is, He could not have intended to create the world and then afterwards resolved on all the blessings for men which are connected with the coming of Christ. All these blessings were part of His eternal purpose and so part of the reason why He made men.

Scripture

The teaching of the Church makes plain the truth that God created also for the good of creatures, since the Vatican Council speaks of the "goods" which by the very act of creation "are imparted to creatures"; and the Fathers are frequent with their testimonies though only, as a rule, as regards mankind:

Vatican Council

St. Athanagoras: "But if the reason (i.e., for creating men) be looked at which is more intimate and internal to

Fathers

created men themselves, it is no other than their very life which is to last for no short time'' (De Resurrect., 12).

St. Irenaeus: ''It was not therefore as if He was in need of man that God created Adam but that He might have someone on whom to bestow His benefits'' (Adv. Haer. L. 4, c. 14).

St. Hilary: ''God made man not because He needed his service in anything but because He is good; He made a rational animal the sharer of His beatitude and He furnished him with life and understanding for the enjoying of the eternity that He would bestow on him'' (In Ps. 2, n. 15).

St. Augustine: ''Thou dost stir us up so that it is a delight to praise Thee, for Thou hast made us for Thyself and our heart is unquiet until it find rest in Thee'' (Confess. L. 1, c. 1, n. 1).

The establishing of this part of our truth by reason is just as clear as the first part. In fact it follows immediately from the first part. For, just as we said before, God cannot but intend what is essentially connected with the making of creatures. But the good of creatures is essentially connected with their making. All that He gives them is good—their existence, their means of life if they are living, their faculties of thinking and loving if they are rational. Reason alone without any aid from revelation can find a bounty in the gift of creation beyond the mere creation itself. One minute of life is a gift; but there are few creatures to whom He has not given far more than this. Then revelation comes to the aid of reason and tells of creatures to whom He has given life without end. God could not, therefore, create, He could not bestow the gift of existence on creatures without the good of creatures being part of the purpose of His creation.

Good of creatures necessary effect of creation

Generousness of the creation

There comes in here the problem of evil and the question as to why, if God desired only the good of creatures, He did not exclude evil from the world. We refer for the solution back to a former chapter. We only repeat here that God could not will moral evil; but He can and does will the glory that a free nature acquires by its victory over moral

Problem of evil

evil, and it was for this purpose that He created that same free nature.

The next thing in the discussion is to deal with the subordination of the second of these two ends to the first. It should not be hard to see this. If it is clear that the purpose of creation must have been both God's own glory and the good of His creatures, it should be clear which of these two ends ought to be subordinated to the other. As God is obliged by the necessity of His essence to know Himself, so He is obliged by the same essence to love Himself with an infinite love which can have for its object nothing but Himself. And this infinite love of God, though it had an infinitely sufficient infinite object from all eternity without creatures, yet overflowed, as it were, upon creatures and upon those creatures which from all eternity He determined to create. It is indeed one of the mysteries of God's inscrutable councils why God when He was infinitely sufficient unto Himself should have wished to create beings of limited perfection to be the sharers of His love. But it is no mystery at all and perfectly clear to our deliberate consideration that He could not subordinate an infinite object to a limited one in the plan of creation; He could not subordinate Himself to creatures. This would be unworthy of God. Self-love is inordinate when one loves oneself without measure and without the proper reference to the source of one's being. But there can be no measure for God's love for His eternal essence and He Himself is the source and principle of His own being.

Subordination of the second end to the first

God's love of Himself is supreme

But the truth that the good of creatures was also a true purpose in creation, becomes plain to us as the sun at noon when we consider those creatures who are capable of happiness, namely, mankind. For happiness is the conscious possession of one's supreme good. But when mankind is in possession of its supreme good, when it knows God to its utmost and loves Him to its utmost, it will be giving Him glory to the utmost or showing to the utmost His excellence in itself. Thus, the primary purpose of man's creation im-

Happiness

plies man's supreme happiness. This is however conditioned by man's free coöperation.

The last thing in our discussion is the subordination of creatures one to the other. This introduces that question, which is so much discussed, as to whether God could have created a world without any rational creatures to recognize His excellence. But the point on which we fix our attention, to the neglect of all controversy, is that God *did not* create such a world. He created rational creatures in the midst of the world and He could not but have intended that these rational creatures should recognize His excellence in the rest of the world around them. He must have intended that they give Him the utmost glory of which they are capable. He gave them, moreover, faculties for perceiving the excellence of creatures. Man, therefore, defaults in the purpose of his creation and he makes creatures default in their purpose when he does not recognize the excellence of God in creatures.

Subordination of irrational creatures to rational

From this it follows that there is a subordination of all creatures to man, whether those creatures be living or inanimate. This is exactly expressed by the words of Genesis, "Let him (i.e., man) have dominion . . . over the whole earth" (Gen. I, 26). The purpose of all creatures as far as they come in touch in any way with man is to manifest to man the divine excellence. This is the purpose of their creator to which man is bound to defer. Hence when man explores the world around him, peers across the sky or digs into the earth or examines and classifies the multitudinous structures with which the surface of the earth is teeming, he does well. He is gaining more and more knowledge of the divine excellence. If, therefore, man deliberately denies the reference of creatures to their creator he is dishonoring his faculties and the findings that his faculties have made. To use the comparison of a forger and an epistolary cheat, when man erases the name of the law-giver from His laws and

Man is lord of creation

Rational use of creatures

Irrational use of creatures

the name of the builder from His structures, he is *garbling the letter* which God has written on the face of nature.

This doctrine may receive a finishing touch from the consideration of man's relation to the angels, those beings whose existence we shall establish in another chapter. It is enough here to suppose that the angels are an order of intelligent beings of a nature superior to man and inhabitants of the same universe which man inhabits. Now the question comes: Is not man subordinate to the angels in the same way that inferior creatures are subordinate to man?

Man not subordinated to the angels

No, he is not. And the reason is that man can tend to God directly through his faculties of intellect and will. He accomplishes God's formal glory by recognizing His excellence in creatures without the mediation of any other intelligent creature either higher or lower than himself. With irrational creatures it is different. Unless man recognizes the divine excellence which they manifest to him, creatures will not contribute that *formal extrinsic* glory to God which they were created to contribute, or rather to aid in contributing. Irrational creatures were made to glorify God, through man. Man was not made to glorify God through the angels nor through anything else but directly—straight up unto His face.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. In what sense is it wrong to use "purpose" with regard to the creator?
2. What is the meaning of "glory" and how is it divided?
3. If there were no rational creatures, what kind of glory would the creator have and what kind would He lack?
4. Why can there be no imperfection in God's glorifying Himself?
5. Prove the truth of this chapter from Romans I, 20, 21.
6. Why cannot God hide His authorship of the world?
7. Why is the good of creatures a necessary purpose of creation?
8. Why is the good of creatures the secondary end of creation?
9. What is happiness and how is it connected with the end of creation?
10. How are irrational creatures subordinated to man and why is there not the same subordination of man to the angels?

CHAPTER XII

THE DESCENT OF MAN

We come now to consider the descent of mankind, that is to say, whether the men who cover the earth today have one or many *original* pairs of ancestors, and whether, besides this, there have been on the earth other races of man who have left no descendants but who had distinct ancestors from the man of today.

Man's ancestry

There are persons who hold different answers to these questions. Some, while they admit the creation of Adam by a particular act of God, hold that there were races of men before Adam but who had passed away before Adam came. They are moved to this opinion by some scientific theories of the antiquity of a primeval man who far antedates the coming of man in the Bible account. Others hold the creation of many original progenitors of man whose descendants are still on the earth and some go so far as to say that the double mention of man's creation in the two chapters of Genesis refers to distinct men. The extreme Evolutionists are not to be considered, whether they hold that man was evolved from one or from many primitive non-human types.

Pre-adamites

Many original progenitors for the human race?

We must admit at once the absolute possibility of many creations of man and of many heads of different families of the human race. But we are not dealing with possibilities but with actualities. We shall establish that there are actually one father and mother for all mankind.

Reason cannot decide

The Scripture and the Church's Tradition together with the teaching of the Fathers are unanimous in proclaiming one pair of progenitors for the whole human race. It is true this teaching would not strictly exclude the existence of an earlier race which had passed away entirely when

the present human race arrived. But the belief in the existence of such a race is certainly against the mind of the Church's Tradition. It is also against what is implied in the Scripture account which would be ridiculous if it were not dealing with the first advent of man into the world.

Tradition is clear on one pair of progenitors

In the first chapter of Genesis God says, "Let us make man." It is true, as we have said, that the order of time in which different sorts of beings came into existence cannot be established from this account. But it is the obvious meaning of the sacred writer that when the coming of any being is mentioned its first appearance is meant, whether it was a gradual or a sudden appearance. Now we have shown that the coming of man was by a particular act of God, that he was not nor could have been evolved out of anything else. Hence it would be an incomplete and indeed a foolish account if when God said, "Let us make man," He referred not to the first but to some subsequent making of man.

First chapter of Genesis

The second chapter of Genesis is clearly a recapitulation of what is told in the first. It is childish to hold that other persons are referred to. In this chapter it says expressly that before the creation of Adam "there was not a man to till the earth." (Gen. II, 5). And before the creation of Eve it says, "but for Adam there was not found a helper like himself."

Second chapter

Then Eve is called "the mother of all the living" (Gen. III, 20) and in the Book of Wisdom we read, "She (i.e. the divine wisdom personified) preserved him that was first formed the father of the world by God when he was created alone" (Wis. X, 1).

Wisdom

In the Acts of the Apostles Saint Paul says in his sermon to the Athenians, "And he (God) hath made of one (man) all mankind to dwell upon the face of the earth" (Acts XVII, 26). Then in his letter to the Corinthians he says, "And as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive" (I Cor. XV, 22). In this passage there is announced the dogma of original sin in which all men are born from

Acts

1st. Corinthians

Adam's time to the end of the world. And the inheritance of the sin from Adam is founded, as we shall see later, on the natural descent of all men from Adam. It is true, again, that such a teaching does not strictly deny the existence of men before Adam. So we can only say that the existence of such men is against the sense of Scripture as a whole and against the understanding of Scripture by the Church and the Fathers. The explicit teaching of the Church on original sin makes our descent from Adam and Eve a matter of revealed doctrine.

Fathers

The testimony of the Fathers is unanimous:

St. Ambrose after describing the creation of Adam and Eve says, "(This was done) that we may know that the nature of man's and of woman's body is one, and the source of the human race is one" (De parad. n. n. 48).

St. Augustine: "This was the reason why God wished to create all men from one, namely, in order that men in their social existence might be bound together not only by the similarity of their nature but also by the ties of blood-kinship." (De Bono Conjug. c. 1, n. 2).

Theodoret: "Let no one have the opinion that the Greeks have one origin, the Romans another, the Egyptians and Persians another . . . for he who has left us the account of our origin and that of the world has taught us that when the creator had formed one man from the earth and had formed woman from his rib, by the union of these two He filled the whole earth, since the children and grandchildren born from them continued to propagate the human race." (De Graec. Affect. Curat., serm. 5).

The voice of Tradition which is in possession of God's revelation is perfectly clear, then, as to the origin of mankind.

Testimony of science

But it is right that we should consider what unassisted reason has to say on the same matter. As we said before there is nothing against reason in plurality of parents for mankind, just as there is nothing against reason in a single pair of ances-

tors. But what is the testimony of science as to the visible state of things on the earth as it *is*, not as it *might be?*

Sound conservative science is, practically speaking, our strong ally in this doctrine. The strongest objection against one origin for mankind would seem to be the differences in the races of men today, the white race and the black, the yellow race and the red, etc.

Differences of race

This objection is answered in a most masterful way by the findings of Evolution. With unexampled industry in both exploration and experiment it has been shown that countless variations occur in the descendants of the parent type in the animal and plant world. These variations are partly caused by heredity; for it is only natural that where the parents are two the new individual should be different from either one of them since it is the result of a new combination, a new sum in addition. The variations are also partly caused by environment and by the adaptation of the individual to new needs—like the obtaining of food, for instance. The variations are also the result of mysterious "jumps" which seem to be an impulse left behind by some distant ancestor. There are perhaps other causes which are as yet unknown but in any case there is every reason why we should account for the variations in the human species by the same set of causes and by others of the same sort which are unknown. Man's body, remember, if we consider it apart from the higher powers which reside in it, is a *vegetating animal* and so we can rightly account for his *bodily* variations by causes similar to those which produce variations in plants and brutes. It is, therefore, not at all unlikely that the Evolutionists may solve for us some day the problem of the negro's color, the shape of his skull and the texture of his hair.*

Solved by the principles of Evolution

Man's body is a vegetating animal

So with regard to the science of languages. While it is true that all the languages of the world have by no means been reduced to a common source, still the researches of

* The pious theory which is sometimes advanced to account for the color of the negro race as the result of a particular curse laid by God on one of the sons of Noah has no foundation in the teaching of the Church or in sound tradition. (See Gen. IX, 25.)

Language

scholars can be said to point in that direction. They are constantly showing that tongues that seemed wide apart have a common parent; they show how climate was undoubtedly a factor in producing variations in the ways of talking which in time seemed to make an entirely new language. Our fair conclusion is that there is no real scientific difficulty in holding that the language which we speak is descended directly as we are from our first father and mother.

Geographical separation

So with the difficulty which might be offered by the wide distances which have long separated the tribes of men in the different parts of the earth. Geographers and geologists tell us that the surface of the earth has changed considerably in the course of thousands of years. Continents that were once united are now divided and where there are now oceans there were once great tracts of habitable land.

Antiquity of human remains

The most important difficulty which science seems to have against our descent from Adam and Eve is the antiquity which is claimed for some of the fossil remains of man which have been uncovered from time to time by scientific excavators. These remains have been given by some scientists the astonishing age of 150,000 years. Would not such a fact if established stand against our revealed records of the history of man from Adam until now? For, according to apparent computation, those records do not give to mankind an antiquity of more than a twentieth part of that time. There are three things to be noted in regard to this.

In the first place it is not *strictly* revealed that there were no men who lived and died before Adam so that the remains of such an ancient race would be no argument against faith.

Science uncertain

In the second place, the scientific evidence for the antiquity of the said remains is very much disputed. Arguments are brought from different scientific sources to show that the above estimate is far too high. Many reputable scientists have estimated the utmost age of the human race as between ten and fifteen thousand years.

In the third place, it should be carefully borne in mind

Age of human race not revealed

that the age of the human race is *not revealed*. The genealogy of the Patriarchs in the Old Testament is not by any means unbroken. It is meant not to give the age of man but to make clear the descent of certain prominent men from Adam and thus to reaffirm the revealed truth that we all come from a common father. So that even if science could show that mankind is a million years old, which science has shown no signs of doing, there would be no challenge to revelation in the discovery. It would not even prove anything against the statement, *close* to revelation, that all the men who have ever inhabited the earth are the direct descendants of Adam and Eve.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How sure can we be that there were no men before Adam?
2. What is there against many progenitors for mankind?
3. What about the two accounts of creation in Genesis?
4. What is the teaching of revelation on the origin of the human race as it now is?
5. How does science solve the difference of race?
6. How far is the difference of language a difficulty?
7. What about the geographical separation of the races of men?
8. What age does science give to the human race?
9. What does revelation say about the antiquity of the race of man?
10. What can we conclude from the genealogy of the Patriarchs in the Old Testament?

CHAPTER XIII

THE ORIGINAL JUSTICE OF THE FIRST MAN

Supernatural state

The state in which the first man was created is the next subject for our consideration. We shall prove from Scripture and the Church's explicit Tradition that both Adam and Eve were created, or at least were established subsequent to their creation in a *supernatural* state.

The word "supernatural" evidently means "above nature" or "above what is natural." Let us pause for a minute and examine more closely the precise meaning of nature in order to understand better the meaning of supernatural.

Nature

Nature is merely another word for essence. It is that which makes a thing what it is. God could not, therefore, create a being without giving that being all that is strictly necessary to make up its essence or nature. If He creates a man He must give him a soul and a body together with those faculties of the soul called understanding and free will. God is certainly free to create what He pleases and to create or not as He pleases. But if He were to leave out any of the above-named things in the creation of a being He would simply be creating something else besides man.

The end of nature

Moreover, if God gives a being which He creates certain powers or faculties He is bound by His wisdom to supply the objects towards which those faculties tend by their nature. He could not give a being eyes and then put him in a world in which everything was invisible; nor give him ears and then put him in a world in which there were no sounds. In the same way, when He creates man with a faculty for perceiving truth and another faculty for tending towards good, He must put both good things and true things within man's natural reach. Note the word well, within a man's *natural* reach.

The supernatural is in no way due to nature

Supernatural, on the contrary is something which is in no way demanded by nature. Nature or essence would be complete without it. And this notion of supernatural has two divisions or degrees which are distinct one above the other. The higher division or degree of the supernatural is a gift which is entirely above the *ordinary* capability of any created being; it can in no way be merited by a created being; and, this is the most important point, it *elevates* a created nature and renders it capable of actions which no actual nor possible creature could perform by natural powers.

Two degrees of the supernatural

The inspired writers of Scripture and theological writers as well, in speaking of this higher degree of the supernatural, or what we might call the *absolutely* supernatural, do not hesitate to use language with regard to it which might at first shock us. They say that it gives man a *participation in the divine nature*,* that it amounts to a *deifying* of man.† This expression cannot of course mean that God communicates His nature to man. To hold this would be a form of Pantheism. Nor does it mean that a man's nature is so united to God as to become personally His nature. This is only true of the human nature of Christ. But participation in the divine nature means here that, through this gift of the supernatural, man is elevated to a true sonship of God, to a participation of rights which properly belong to God alone; it also means that by the presence in man of this gift of the supernatural certain actions of his have God in a special way for their principle so that in a true sense they acquire a divine value. This will become clearer by an example further on.

Share of the divine nature

Sonship of God

Preternatural

The second and lower division of the supernatural is a gift which like the first is in no way due to the nature to which it is given and can in no way be merited by it. But, in striking difference from the first and higher degree of the supernatural, this kind of gift is not above the capability

* "By whom (i.e. Christ) he hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter I, 4).
† Cf. Ramiere, *Le Cœur de Jésus*, the chapter entitled "La Divinisation d'Homme."

of all created nature and it does not elevate its possessor to the capability of actions essentially above his nature, to, so called, *divine* actions.

Sanctifying grace

The principle and root of the supernatural in the first sense is the gift of sanctifying grace. The nature of this will be discussed more fully in the treatise on grace which will come in a later volume. It is enough to say here that sanctifying grace is a permanent gift infused into the soul by God which gives the soul a right to a place in the very presence of God and enables it to perform actions tending towards this purely supernatural end.

Immortality

An example of the supernatural in the second sense is the gift to man of immortality. This is clearly not above the capability of all created natures. For a pure spirit like an angel or even the soul of man apart from the body is immortal by its nature without any extra gift of God. This sort of gift is called *preternatural.*

Now with regard to the state of our first parents, we have to prove that they were endowed with the gift of sanctifying grace and furthermore endowed with a number of preternatural gifts.

Adam and Eve were alike

It will be noticed that most of the references name only Adam. This does not mean that there is the least doubt that Eve also possessed the same supernatural gifts. Just as it is the clear teaching of revelation that Eve, together with all mankind born after Adam, lost those gifts through Adam's sin, so it is clear that before Adam's sin the whole of mankind besides Adam was in possession of the said gifts. But the whole of mankind besides Adam consisted of Eve alone up to the time of Adam's sin.*

The Councils of Orange and Trent

The Council of Orange (529) decreed: "If anyone says that by the sin of Adam's fall the whole man, that is both in his body and his soul, was not changed for the worse, let him be anathema" (D. 174). This Council was not Ecumenical

* Cf. Ramiere, *Le Cœur de Jésus,* the chapter entitled "La Divinisation d'Homme." First children were not born until after the fall. The contrary of this would in no way affect our doctrine.

but its decrees were confirmed by Pope Boniface II and so obtained infallibility. And the Council of Trent more than a thousand years later affirmed the same teaching: "If anyone does not admit that the first man Adam when he had transgressed the command of God in Paradise straightway lost the sanctity and justice in which he had been established, let him be anathema" (Sess. V.–D. 788).

Common teaching of the Church

The doctrine that the sanctity and justice which Adam and Eve possessed before the fall and which by Adam's fall were lost, consisted in nothing else than sanctifying grace is clear from the whole teaching of the Church on the nature of original sin which will be dealt with in the chapters that follow.

Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift

That this sanctifying grace is above the natural capabilities of every created being is clear from the Church's condemnation of the following opinions as false and favoring heresy:

"The elevation and exaltation of human nature unto the sharing of the divine nature was due to the innocence of the first condition (of man) and hence must be called natural and not supernatural" (Errors of Baius, D. 1021).

And again:

"The grace of Adam is the sequel of creation and was due to the sinless and innocent nature (of the first man)" (Errors of Quesnelles, D. 1385).

Could this grace be due to any creature?

It is true that some few theologians hold that God could create a nature to whom sanctifying grace would be due. And so this grace would not be supernatural in the sense in which we defined it; it would merely be above the capabilities of all *actually* created natures. Such an opinion is not a condemned one but seems against the sense of Scripture as well as the understanding of the Scriptures by the Fathers. By sanctifying grace we are made "the sons of God" (John I, 12) and "sharers of the divine nature." How could any conceivable creature have this by right? No nature has a right to anything that is in an order above its own. But the divine

order is above every conceivable order in which a creature could exist. And it is to this order that creatures are raised by sanctifying grace.

Reasons against such an opinion

Once more, the Fathers teach that the reason why sanctifying grace is not due to us is precisely because we are servants. And they indicate the reason of our servile nature which is precisely because we are *created*. Could any nature be created which is not servile?

Let us turn back now and show from the Scriptures that Adam and Eve were endowed with sanctifying grace before the fall.

Proof of the possession of this grace by Adam

The argument from the Scripture turns upon the plain teaching of the New Testament that Christ restored to us what Adam had lost and this was nothing else than sanctifying grace. For the principal gift that we receive from the merits of Christ is sanctifying grace by which we become "sons of God" and heirs to the personal, face-to-face vision of Him. Saint Paul speaks of Christ as One Who buys us back from the slavery of sin to the ancient liberty, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption (i.e. buying back) that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. III, 24). He speaks of Christ as creator, "If then any be in Christ a new creature . . . behold the old things are passed away" (II Cor. V, 17). Finally, he calls Christ the "new Adam," that is, one from Whom we inherit grace, whereas from the old Adam we inherit a nature deprived of the grace *which Adam had lost*: "For if by the offense of one many died; much more the grace of God and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" (Rom. V, 15). "The first man Adam was made into a living soul; the last Adam into a quickening spirit" (I Cor. XV, 45). All these texts point to the winning of sanctifying grace for us by Christ. This is the grace which, as we shall elsewhere prove, comes to us first in Baptism, or, which we win back by contrition when we have lost it; but *never* without the aid of the merits of Christ.

St. Paul

From these texts it is clear that we inherit a loss from Adam and a gain from Christ. But it must be admitted that the texts only vaguely insinuate that Adam himself was once in possession of what he lost for us. From the nature of the case this is not necessarily so. Adam might have been created in a state in which he might gain for *himself* as well as for us that which he failed indeed to gain.

We inherit loss from Adam, gain from Christ

We must turn then for the explicit confirmation of this doctrine to the Fathers of the Church. Their testimony is unanimous and so plain that there is no need of an explicit definition by the Church. Their words amount to a manifestation of the Church's constant teaching.

Fathers more explicit

St. Gregory of Nyssa: "That (i.e. human nature) which had been made unto the likeness of a heavenly being was brought down to the earth; that for which a kingdom had been destined was humbled to the dust (De Beat. Orat., 3).

"Let us return, therefore, to that divine grace, in which God in the beginning created man saying, 'Let us make man to our image and likeness' " (De Opif. Hom., c. 30).

St. Basil: "Man was made to the image and likeness of God, but his soul, driven to vicious desires through sin, defaced the beauty of the image" (Serm. Ascet., n. 1).

Tertullian: "Man is restored to God through Baptism unto His image, (man) who formerly had been (made) unto the image of God" (De Bapt., 5).

St. Leo the Great: "If we faithfully and wisely comprehend our initial creation, we shall find that man was therefore established unto the image (of God) that he might be the imitator of his Author; and this is the dignity of his (man's) nature—that is, a dignity conferred at the outset of his existence, since the form of the divine goodness shines forth in us as if in a sort of mirror. Unto which likeness indeed the grace of our Savior restores us every day when that which fell in the first Adam is lifted up in the second" (De Jejun., serm. 1, c. 1).

St. Irenaeus: This Father introduces Adam as if talking

to us. "Since I have lost through disobedience that robe of holiness which I had from the Holy Ghost, now I know indeed that I am worthy of such a garment as this (i.e., the garment of fig leaves) which affords no delight; it even gnaws and scratches my body" (Adv. Haer., L. 2, c. 23, n. 5).

St. Cyril of Alexandria: "Adam in paradise was keeping the gift (of God) and the divine characteristics by his likeness to the creator through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit" (In Jo., L. 2, c. 1).

St. Cyprian: "Adam impatient of the deadly food contrary to the divine command fell upon death, nor with patient guardianship did he keep the grace that he had received from God" (De Bono Patientiae, c. 19).

St. John Damascene: (This Father closes the list of the Eastern or more ancient Fathers). "The Supreme Builder created this member of mankind a male imparting to him His divine grace and through this communicating His very Self to him" (De fide Orthod., L. 2, c. 30).

Was Adam created with sanctifying grace?

There is a question raised among theologians as to whether Adam and Eve were endowed with sanctifying grace from the first moment of their creation or whether they first underwent a period of preparation. The Church leaves this question undecided and so we shall leave it. It is enough to say that, while many of the earlier theologians disputed this point, the later ones are practically unanimous in agreeing that there was no period of preparation and that our first parents were endowed with sanctifying grace from the first moment of their creation.

We must pass over the possession by our first parents of the infused virtues which belong to the Treatise on Grace. These virtues follow from the possession of sanctifying grace itself. Adam and Eve did not have use for all the virtues for which we have use. They could not, for instance, place acts of either penitence or pity. For, as we shall see, there was no sin in their state nor any sorrow. But the roots of all the virtues were in them since they were beings raised to

Many of the infused virtues were Adam's

a supernatural state by the wonderful gift of sanctifying grace.

We come now to establish the possession by Adam and Eve of a number of preternatural gifts. The first of these is called the gift of integrity or freedom from concupiscence.

Integrity

Concupiscence is usually understood of the tendency in our nature towards things which are contrary to holy purity. This is not the meaning which the word has in theology. Here it means the tendency of the sensitive appetite towards an object without the direction of the reason and the government of the will. In order to understand this better we must discuss the two kinds of faculties which are common to all mankind.

Concupiscence

Every man has a sensitive nature which includes the power of perceiving things with his eyes, his touch, his taste, etc.; and it also includes appetites which are powers of desiring things which will satisfy his eyes, his touch, his taste, etc. But man has also a rational nature which includes the power of seeing things which are above sense, and a rational appetite for desiring things which the senses cannot reach. Now it is clear that the higher powers should prevail and dominate in man who is a rational being. But it is also true that the sensitive perceptions very often reach their objects before the reason or the will can deal with them. We often see and hear something before we think and before our will has anything to say about it. Then when the object is one that will satisfy our sensitive desires or appetites these same desires necessarily go out towards such objects. And this is not all; they also draw the will after them—not by a deliberate act, for the will is free and acts deliberately only when it pleases—but by an indeliberate movement.

Sensitive appetite

Rational will is drawn after the sensitive appetites

Take an example. A man has made a vow that he will not drink water for a certain time. He becomes terribly thirsty. Then he comes before a cool delightful spring. Not only his parched tongue and throat desire the water but the *whole man* desires it. And yet his will never for a moment

Example

wavers in the fixed determination to keep his vow. But his will goes out uncontrollably with his senses in the desire for water. This is concupiscence. And it does not make any difference whether we identify it with the indeliberate motion of the rational will caused by the sensitive appetite, or with the action of the sensitive appetite thus moving the will.

Not sin but the fuel of sin

We should note carefully that concupiscence is by no means a sin. Only by a deliberate act of the will can we sin. But concupiscence is called the "fuel of sin" because it, naturally, makes sin so much easier. We must also note that concupiscence is a necessary result of a nature which is made up, as man's is, of body and spirit and therefore the freedom from it is in no way due to our nature and so is a supernatural gift. Finally the freedom from concupiscence is not supernatural in the higher sense since there are created natures to which such a freedom is a necessary consequence of their nature. Thus an angel cannot have concupiscence nor can the soul of a man have it when this soul is living apart from the body. The freedom from concupiscence is strictly a preternatural gift.*

Doctrine not defined but indicated

We prove the presence of this gift in our first parents from the teaching of the Church. There is some doubt whether it is an *explicitly revealed* doctrine. The Council of Trent, however, comes close to indicating it. For this Council, speaking of concupiscence, says that it is called "sin" not because it is a sin in itself but *"because it comes from a sin."* But this could only be from Adam's sin, since we are all born with concupiscence. But whatever comes from Adam's sin is, as we saw before, something which Adam had and lost both for himself and for his posterity.

Unanimous teaching of theologians

It is certain that this doctrine is the universal teaching of theologians. These draw their arguments first from the Holy

* We should note here that according to the teaching of the Church, the Blessed Virgin Mary was endowed with this gift. The same is also *piously believed* of some of the saints. There were also many of the saints, and great ones, too, to whom this gift was not given. Saint Paul makes it pretty plain that it was not given to him (cf. Rom. VII, 17-25).

Scripture. For there in the Book of Genesis we read that when Adam and Eve had disobeyed God's command they at once became conscious of their nakedness and were ashamed of it, whereas they had felt no such shame before (Gen. III, 7; II, 25). This clearly shows that they no longer had their sense appetites under the complete control of reason and will. Otherwise the human body could not become the object of any ungoverned desires such as could make one ashamed. **Genesis**

Theologians also draw a confirmation of this doctrine from the teaching of the Fathers. We shall quote one passage, an extremely powerful one, from St. Augustine. "It is written," he says, "that they were naked and were not ashamed; not because their nakedness was unknown to them, but there was as yet no shameful nakedness because concupiscence did not as yet stir the members in spite of the will, nor, as yet, *did disobedient flesh* give testimony, as it were, against man for his *disobedience*" (De Civ. Dei, L. 14, c. 18).

That freedom from concupiscence is not due to human nature is the common doctrine of the Fathers. St. Augustine says, "There was the grace of God mighty where an earthly and animal body did not have the desires of a beast" (Contra Jul., L. 4, c. 16, n. 82). And this is confirmed by the Church's express condemnation of the following opinion. "The integrity of the first creation (i.e., of the first created man) was not an undue (i.e., preternatural) exaltation of human nature, but its natural condition" (Errors of Baius, condemned by Pius V, D. 1026).

The next supernatural gift which we must prove for Adam and Eve was their freedom from death. Death is the separation of body and soul and hence the possibility of dying follows from the very constitution of man's nature. Immortality is for man a supernatural gift, but it is not more than preternatural; for a simple nature, like an angel's, which is not made up of two separable parts is naturally immortal.

Immortality of Adam's body

The immortality of Adam is explicitly defined by the Church. For the Sixteenth Council of Carthage (418), the

Council of Carthage

decrees of which were approved by Pope Zozimus, teaches, "If anyone shall say that Adam was created mortal, so that he would have died in the body whether he had sinned or not sinned, let him be anathema." And the same doctrine is confirmed by the decrees of Orange and of Trent.

The Scripture, both the Old and the New Testament, has very many passages which speak of the "death" which came to us from Adam. But there are none plainer than the Book of Genesis which gives the words of God to the pair in the garden. "But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death."

Immortality indicated in Genesis

Two things are most clearly implied here if we take what was said in connection with the rest of the inspired history. First, God did not mean that they should pass out of this life immediately on the eating of the fruit. For it was only after a long life that the disobedient Adam died as the rest of men have done since him. God meant that if you disobey you shall at once become subject to death or capable of dying. And so it follows, secondly, that unless Adam ate the forbidden fruit he would not be subject to death. He could not, clearly, be deprived for a punishment of something which he did not possess. The Fathers are unanimous in so understanding this passage and in their teaching of the original immortality of Adam and Eve.

How induced in the body?

But there is considerable dispute among the Fathers and among the theologians as to how precisely the quality of immortality was brought about in the body of the first man and woman. Many hold that it was brought about by the eating of the fruit of the tree of life (Gen. III, 22), but this does not solve the question; for we can still ask how this fruit made the body immortal. Perhaps the best solution is that God by His special providence kept Adam and Eve in perfect health and prevented in their bodies the least beginning of decay as He kept from them all sickness or hurt. Then in due time if they had remained faithful He would have

taken them up into His presence, whereupon their bodies would have received the quality of *glory* which would have made those bodies *in themselves* immortal. It must be well understood that Adam's body in the garden was not a glorified body such as will belong to all men after the resurrection.

Probably not intrinsically immortal

We hardly need any teaching of the Church or of the Fathers to tell us that the immortality of the body is a preternatural gift. We see the body of man tending towards death every day by its very nature. The doctrine can, however, be proved indirectly as follows: The human race, as will be presently shown, lost the gift of immortality on account of Adam's sin. Therefore the gift of immortality is not due to human nature. For we could not lose anything which is due to our nature as a punishment for the sin of another. This last statement will also become plainer in another chapter. St. Augustine says plainly, "Man is mortal by the condition of his body, immortal by the benefit of his creator" (De Gen. ad lit., L. 6, c. 25, n. 36). And the Church condemns the opinion "That the immortality of the first man was not the benefit of grace (i.e., a preternatural gift) but his natural condition."

We come now to the remainder of the gifts with which our first parents were endowed by God.

The first are the gifts of knowledge. Knowledge is of two kinds, supernatural and natural, according as it is received from God or obtained by the diligence of our human faculties. In the case of Adam at the beginning of his existence, as we are now considering him, he must have received all his knowledge from God either directly or indirectly (e.g., through angels). By supernatural knowledge in the case of Adam, therefore, we mean the revelation of those truths which his reason could not discover and by natural those things within reach of reason.

Natural and supernatural knowledge in Adam

Since Adam together with sanctifying grace was endowed with the infused virtue of faith, he must have had some of the truths of faith. God certainly revealed His existence to

Mysteries revealed to him

him and it is commonly thought that the mystery of the Trinity was also revealed. It is also held by many that to Adam was revealed the vision of the creation and by him was handed down to Moses who committed it to writing as we have it. How much further supernatural revelation was given to him we cannot say or how much was withdrawn from him after the fall. But what we are specially concerned with now is the natural infused knowledge which was given to him.

Exalted mind of Adam

It is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers and of theologians that to Adam was given a mind of surpassing human power and that this mind was enriched by God with very extensive human learning. They deduce this from Adam's dignity as the head of the human race and from the fact that he was to be the founder of human society which was, in God's first plan, to be enlightened and happy. They also

Proved from Genesis

confirm this from the passage in Genesis in which man is bidden to "fill the earth and subdue it and rule over . . . all living creatures that move upon the earth" (Gen. I, 28). He could not do this without the possession of overmastering knowledge. The Fathers also prove this from the passage in which all the living things were named by Adam (Gen. II, 19, 20).

All the natural virtues were given to Adam for the same reason, a sublime intelligence, therefore, and a strong will and all that goes with these.

Adam preserved from suffering

It is also a certain and common opinion of the Church's teachers that Adam and Eve in the garden were secured from suffering of every kind both of body and mind. The Scripture means this when it speaks of the "paradise of pleasure" (Gen. II, 8) in which God placed the first man and woman after He had created them. This place of delight had been prepared, we are told, by God's own hand for the reception of man. And there is a passage of rare beauty in Ecclesiasticus in which after describing the creation of man and the various gifts with which he was endowed the holy

Ecclesiasticus

writer says, "And their eyes saw the majesty of his glory and their ears heard his glorious voice" (Ecclus. XVII, 11). What more perfect description could there be of the uninterrupted joy of existence in that garden of delight? St. Augustine thus describes the life of Adam:

St. Augustine

"And so man lived in paradise according to his desire as long as he desired what God had commanded; he lived in the enjoyment of God from which Good he was good; he lived without want of any kind, having always the means of life within his power. There was food at hand so that he could not hunger, drink that he could not thirst and the tree of life that old age could not wither him. There was in his body no corruption, nor from his body came pain to afflict any of his senses. Perfect health in his flesh, absolute tranquillity in his soul. As in paradise there was neither heat nor cold, so in the serene will of the dweller therein there arose no disturbance either from (the heat of) desire or (the chill of) fear" (De Civ. Dei, L. 14, c. 26).

Immunity from venial sin

Some writers go so far as to say that such was the perfection of Adam's and Eve's state in the garden that venial sin was impossible for them. This must, of course, at once be explained; for as a matter of fact they fell into much worse than venial sin. The meaning is that the half-deliberate venial sins of impulse which contribute so much to our unhappiness today were impossible to Adam and Eve both on account of the perfection and strength of their faculties and from the providence of God Who would allow nothing to interfere with the joy of these specially blessed ones.

Adam in a state of trial

But fully deliberate sin was possible for them both. That we know for sure. In other words Adam and Eve were in a *state of trial,* not in a *state of term.* The first of these states is one in which a free being, whether man or angel, is able to turn deliberately away from his last end. It is not a permanent state; for it would be contrary to the wisdom and justice of God that one should remain always capable of turning away from Him. And so from its very nature the state

of trial leads to the state of term in which turning away from God, one's last end, is no longer possible in the slightest degree. It should be noted, however, that in the state of term no merit of any kind is any longer possible.

It is hardly necessary to prove that all this happiness of Adam and his security against all the causes of pain and sorrow were in no way due to his nature and so were preternatural gifts. If we just look at them one by one we see that they each and all require the extraordinary providence of God to which our nature has no claim. The Fathers constantly speak of the pains and afflictions which holy people suffer on earth. And if these things are not suffered for their sins they must be merely natural to our life here on earth. The Church expressly condemns the opinion that only those suffer who have sinned.

This state of Adam's felicity is mainly a matter of revelation, and mere reason cannot treat of it to any great extent. At the same time learned men point to the fact that in the traditions of very many if not of all the earliest peoples there is mention of a state of supreme peace and happiness in which mankind lived at some very distant date. There is also a very important discovery that has come to light in modern times. Some great antiquarian scholars have reached the conclusion that primitive man (that is, the earliest man of whom science can find any record) was not the uncouth and brutish savage such as he had long been considered, but a being of superior intelligence. From this they draw the conclusion that the state of savagery in which men have been found in different parts of the world is a state into which they have fallen not in which they originally were.* Thus does honest science point in the same direction as revelation.

Human tradition points to man's original happiness

TEST QUESTIONS

1. **What is the strict due of nature?**
2. **What are the two kinds of supernatural gifts?**

*Cf. *Prehistoric Religion*, by Rev. Philo L. Mills, D.D.

3. What is meant by "sharing the divine nature"?
4. Prove that Adam and Eve had the same gifts.
5. Why is sanctifying grace above the due of any creature?
6. Prove that Adam possessed sanctifying grace before his fall.
7. What is meant by concupiscence and why is not the immunity from it a supernatural gift in the highest sense?
8. What is the difference between the immortality of Adam and that of a risen body?
9. What was Adam's knowledge?
10. How was he immune from venial sin?

CHAPTER XIV

THE FALL OF OUR FIRST PARENTS

We come now to consider the fall of our first parents, that is to say, the grievous sin which they both committed.

The grievousness of the sin of Adam and Eve is explicitly defined by the Church. The Council of Trent says:

The grievousness of Adam's sin

"If anyone does not admit that Adam the first man when he had transgressed the command of God in paradise straightway lost the holiness and justice in which he had been established, and incurred the wrath and displeasure of God by the malice of such an offense, let him be anathema."

From its effects

We can at once judge of the grievousness of a sin from its effect and its punishment. Nothing less than a grievous sin could incur the "wrath and displeasure of God"; nothing less than a grievous sin could bring about the loss of "justice" which is precisely the supreme gift of sanctifying grace.

The Fathers

The passages which we quoted from the Fathers dealing with the original justice of the first man are filled with explicit references to the first man's grievous sin. And so we need not repeat them here. We shall take, however, one more passage from St. John Chrysostom in which he speaks of the reasonableness of the divine command which Adam violated.

"The kind Lord wishing to teach man from the beginning that his founder and creator was the maker of all the things that he could see, willed by that light command to manifest Himself as master. It was as if some generous master after turning over for someone's use an ample and splendid home, willed to receive back not the entire price (of what he had given) but a trifling part, so that his right of ownership might be vindicated and that the other might know that he

himself was not master of the place but was enjoying it by the gracious kindness of the (true) master" (Hom. 16, in Gen.).

The narrative of Genesis is most clear

But it is from the simple account of the Scripture that the nature and effects of Adam's sin are taught to us most clearly and most fruitfully. The Scripture, as we have said, needs a teacher. But in this particular place the Scripture itself is the best of teachers.

"And the Lord took man and put him into the midst of the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it. And he commanded him, saying: "Of every tree of paradise thou shalt eat:

Solemn prohibition

"But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat. For in whatsoever day thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Gen. II, 15, 16, 17).

Easy to observe

Notice the nature of God's command. It was not hard or unreasonable. It was simply a prohibition affecting one single tree, while all the other fruitful and luscious trees of paradise could be freely partaken of. Then the command was emphasized with a solemnity which leaves no doubt of its gravity.

Meat on Friday

There is an objection sometimes brought forward by outsiders against the Church's law not to eat meat on Friday. How, they ask, can it be a sin and, especially, a grievous sin to eat meat on a particular day, since meat has nothing whatever evil in it? The answer is that neither did the forbidden tree in paradise have anything evil in it. All the trees that God had made were good. And so the eating of a particular fruit is undoubtedly in itself a very trifling matter (like the eating of meat) but it becomes a serious sin from the grave prohibition of God's authority.

Temptation of Eve

Let us now consider the narrative of Eve's temptation by the serpent. It does not concern us to decide whether the serpent was (as is generally held) possessed by the devil who spoke from it, or was the mere appearance of a serpent, or was not there at all so that the *interior* temptation of Eve

Not a figurative account

is merely thus described. (This last interpretation is against the plain sense of Scripture and would not be tolerated by the Church.*) All that we fix our attention on is the action of the mother of the human race when it was suggested to her to break the command of God; then the subsequent action of her husband.

"And he (i.e., the serpent) said to the woman: Why hath God commanded you that you should not eat of every tree in paradise?

"And the woman answered him saying: Of the fruit of the trees in paradise we do eat:

"But of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of paradise God hath commanded us that we should not eat; and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die.

"And the serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die the death.

"For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as gods knowing good and evil.

"And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave to her husband who did eat" (Gen. III, 1-6).

Many sinful elements both in the temptation and in the sin

This is the sin of our first parents and the more we look at it the more its grievousness is made plain. We know that every mortal sin must be a grievous matter, must have sufficient reflection and full consent of the will. All these three are present here. The matter was grievous on account of God's command which Eve remembers so well that she rehearses it to the serpent. Then her reflection is most perfect. She deliberately listens to the tempter when he suggests other sins to her besides the sin of disobedience. "God is a liar," says the serpent, "you will by no means die as He

* It is not, however, necessary to argue from the curse laid by God on the serpent that serpents before that time went upright. God merely took a fact in nature to remind all men of something. In the same way He took the rainbow which had been seen in the sky long before the flood to remind mankind of His future forbearance.

said." Then he adds the terrible temptation of pride, by which, as we shall see later, he himself fell. He tempts her with the thought of becoming like to God. And the woman by her action consents to the truth of what the serpent said. For, without further protest, she turns and looks at the tree with eyes of desire and then deliberately eats of it. Her action says plainer than words, "Yes, God must have lied and I should much like to become like to God." There is more than one grievous element in this sin of Eve.

With regard to Adam we are not told whether he was present at the temptation of his wife. In any case, the account leaves no doubt that very little time intervened between Eve's and Adam's fall. It is quite clear that the two did not feel the awful pain of guilt until after they had both fallen. And so it is very likely that the serpent filled Eve with temporary exultation so that she would run to her husband and with wicked eloquence urge upon him the lying promises of the tempter. Adam must have had a motive for sinning. No man sins for sinning's sake. Adam could not have been tempted by such things as would tempt us—the mere taste of the fruit, for instance, or anything else that would appeal merely to the senses. His mind was too clear and his will was too strong in its perfect control of all the appetites. And, besides, all his wants were perfectly supplied in the garden of delight. The only thing that could tempt him would be something that could appeal to his mind. This motive his wife supplied him with. And so this man who had been appointed lord of the visible creation, with all his strength of will and clearness of understanding, with neither the pressure of hunger nor anything else to excuse him in the least bit, deliberately broke the command of God. Nothing can be more plain than the grievousness of Adam's sin. Everything that we are told about him makes his sin worse.

Adam's sin

He must have been tempted by something higher than sense-pleasure

We must now consider the effects of our first parents' sin on themselves.

The Church teaches most explicitly that they lost at once the gift of sanctifying grace. This is, we know, the necessary effect of every mortal sin. The Council of Trent declares in the place that we quoted before, "that Adam the first man when he had transgressed the command of God in paradise straightway lost the holiness and justice in which he had been established."

Effects of the sin on Adam and Eve

But what we wish to consider particularly are the other gifts which had been added to the gift of sanctifying grace. The Church adds to what is quoted above, "And he (i.e., Adam) therefore incurred that death with which God had threatened him before and, besides death, he passed under the power of him who was from then on the lord of death, that is, under the power of the devil;* and the entire Adam was changed for the worse in both body and soul through the malice of his offense."

Trent

There is not a dissenting voice among the Fathers from the declaration that Adam lost all without exception of the gifts that accompanied his original justice and innocence.

All supernatural gifts lost

But once more it is the Scripture that is plainest and most powerful in its account. As soon as the sin is done the punishment begins. Let us read the account just as it is.

"And the eyes of both of them were opened: and when they perceived themselves to be naked, they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves aprons.

"And when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in paradise at the afternoon air, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God, amidst the trees of paradise.

Clear from the Scripture account

"And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him: Where art thou?

"And he said: I heard thy voice in paradise; and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

"And he said to him: And who hath told thee that thou

* This means that Adam became the object for the devil's assaults; and that death and all the other afflictions of life were attributable to the devil's first victory over him.

wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?

"And Adam said: The woman whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

We pass over the cursing of the serpent, with the promise that shows that God's extraordinary love for man had not ceased, and then the announcement of the woman's punishment, and come to the punishment of Adam.

"And to Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life.

"Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." But the last words of God are by far the most terrible of all.

"And he said: Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil: now, therefore, lest perhaps he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever.

"And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the earth from which he was taken" (Gen. III, 7-23).

Note the indications one after the other of the loss of all the gifts that had so exalted and adorned Adam when he came from the hand of God.

First there is the shame of his concupiscence which makes him cover his body; then there is fear of the voice and the face of God—fear that he had never known before. Then comes the folly of appealing to his nakedness as a reason for hiding from God; as if God had not made his body just as it is. Adam's superior wisdom has gone. Then the low cowardice of bringing forward his wife's sin to shield himself. The high degree of his natural virtues was gone. Then

Enumeration of gifts lost

the security from sorrow and suffering was taken away by Adam's condemnation to a life of bitter toil amid thorns and thistles. We know what those "thorns and thistles" are. They grow along the road of life. Then comes the loss of the glorious gift of immortality which Adam had possessed before in his body. He was condemned not only to suffer death but corruption as well. He must "return to the earth from which thou wast taken." Then comes God's terrible reproach to Adam: "Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil." It makes no difference whether we consider these words as addressed to Adam or as representing God's reflections with Himself. They are written into the account of Adam's sin and they culminate the accusation against him. Put in another way the words mean this: "You, O Adam, thought to become like to God by getting a knowledge of good and evil. You *have* the experience of evil now." And so Adam was no longer in that state in which sin was so difficult. Sin is easy for him now. This marks the passing of the last of his supernatural gifts, namely, the preservation from the impulses and the occasions of sin. Then comes the sad account of Adam's expulsion from the paradise of pleasure in which his life had been so happy, so peaceful and so protected.

Adam's terrible sin of pride

The whole account of what the first man lost by his fall may be said to be given the last touch by what follows in the fourth chapter of Genesis. There is told the murder of one of Adam's sons by the other. This would not have happened if Adam had remained the strong and wise father and ruler of the human race that he had been before he fell. In a true sense, then, Adam could say that the blood of his son Abel was on his own head.

The murder of Abel

The question may well be asked whether Adam ever got back the sanctifying grace that he lost. The Fathers and theologians are all of the opinion that both he and Eve recovered the state of grace through contrition. This fact seems to be plainly taught in the Book of Wisdom: "She

Adam and Eve both repented

(i.e., the divine wisdom personified) preserved him that was first formed by God the father of the world . . . And she brought him out of his sin" (Wis. X, 1, 2). **Wisdom**

St. Augustine says, "They (i.e., Adam and Eve) by living a just life afterwards are rightly believed to have been freed from ultimate punishment through the blood of the Lord" (De Pecc. Merit., L. 2, c. 34, n. 55). Our first parents were even venerated as saints in some of the Eastern Churches. There is nothing impossible in this, since a life of sincere penance could make anyone a saint, no matter what his sin had been. But this veneration never had the sanction of the universal Church. **St. Augustine**

What we must particularly note in closing are the words of St. Augustine, "*through the blood of the Lord.*" These words contain the important doctrine of the Church that no one after Adam's fall, including Adam himself, received any grace whatever except through the merits of Christ. And this same Christ was promised to Adam immediately after his fall, as we have seen. Poor stricken Adam and Eve, then, though deprived of all their *preternatural* gifts, could look up with hope as we can in the infinite merits of the Redeemer. It is not at all unlikely that when they heard the promise from God's lips they knelt down then and there on the soil of the garden of Eden and made their act of contrition and began their lives over again. **Grace came to Adam through Christ** **Probably repented at once**

The matter of Adam's fall is pure revelation with which reason alone cannot deal. Nevertheless there are traditions which refer to it in all the ancient religions. One might say that this only proves that the Jewish story was widely spread over the world. But no; it proves more than this. The fact of a story's reception by all nations creates the strongest rational presumption for its truth. A fiction or a lie cannot wear the cloak of truth so widely and so long. The notorious French writer Voltaire, though most irreligious in his life and beliefs, says, "The fall of Adam is the foundation of the **Human tradition and the fall**

theology of almost all the ancient peoples'' (Philosophie de l'histoire, c. 17).

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Prove the grievousness of Adam's sin.
2. Explain the parallel of meat on Friday.
3. Show the different elements in the temptation of Eve.
4. Prove that the gift of integrity was lost.
5. Likewise the gift of immortality;
6. The immunity from pain;
7. The plenitude of natural virtues;
8. The gift of wisdom.
9. How is the murder of Abel attributable to Adam's sin?
10. How do you prove that Adam and his wife repented?

CHAPTER XV

THE SHARE OF THE HUMAN RACE IN THE PRIMEVAL FALL

We have seen the effects of the first sin on the ones who committed it. Now we come to consider the effect of the same identical sin on all the descendants of Adam and Eve unless there is revealed evidence of an exception.

Effects of the fall on the human race

There are certain questions which are sometimes asked with regard to the sin of Adam. The answers to these questions will make plainer the doctrine which we are establishing.

Suppose, one may ask, Eve alone had sinned and Adam had stood firm in his fidelity to God's command, would there have been the same effects of her sin as followed from the sin of Adam? The universal answer of the Church's teaching is, "No." And the reason is that Adam alone and not Eve was constituted by God the head of the human race.

Suppose Eve alone had sinned

Again the question is asked whether if both Adam and Eve had remained obedient but some descendant of theirs had grievously transgressed the law of God, would the people descended from this child of Adam experience the same effects of his sin as the descendants of Adam experience from his sin? The answer again is, "No." And for exactly the same reason as was given before. Only one man was constituted head of the human race.

Suppose some descendant had sinned

Finally the question is asked whether if Adam had not sinned in the matter of the forbidden fruit, but had afterwards committed some other grievous sin, would the effects of this sin have been passed on to us? (Remember that it has been proved that we are all without exception descended from Adam.)

Suppose Adam and Eve had otherwise sinned

The answer to this question is uncertain but the very un-

certainty brings out the sureness of our doctrine. We are not sure what would have happened if Adam had committed some other sin than the one he committed because we have no revelation whatever on any sin of Adam's but one. We do know what happened from the commission of that one sin of Adam and that is enough.

The first effect of the sin of the first man was to render the whole human race in a true sense *guilty* of that sin, so that every human being born into the world, unless, as we said before, there is revealed evidence of an exception, is afflicted with a real stain which is called by the Church *original sin.* It will be necessary to explain how in any sense a person can be guilty of the sin of another. But the point to establish now is that it is revealed by God that all men are truly guilty of the first sin.

Human race guilty of Adam's sin

The teaching of the Council of Trent goes as follows (Sess. V. D. 789):

"If anyone asserts that the sin of Adam injured him alone and not his descendants, or that only in regard to himself alone did he lose the holiness and justice which he had from God and did not lose it for us as well; or that stained as he was by the sin of disobedience he (Adam) transmitted death and afflictions of body to all the human race but did not also transmit sin which is the death of the soul, let him be anathema; since he (i.e., one who holds this) contradicts the words of the Apostle, 'Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned' " (Rom. V, 12).

Trent

We notice that in this clear declaration of the Church the Scripture is referred to as confirmation of the teaching. There are texts both in the Old and New Testament referring to the sinful stain with which all men are born. For instance, King David says in the Psalm, "For behold I was conceived in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. L, 7); and in the book of Job we read, "Who can make him (i.e., man in general) clean that is conceived of unclean seed?

Proof from Scripture. Old Testament

is it not thou who only art?'' (i.e., God alone) (Job XIV, 4). Then throughout the New Testament we find mention of Baptism ''for the remission of sins''; and since Baptism is necessary for infants, there must be question of sin in which men are born. But the classical text, as it is called, which deals with original sin is the fifth chapter of St. Paul to the Romans, which is quoted by the Council of Trent in the decree just given. Let us consider this text somewhat at length.

New Testament

''But death reigned from Adam unto Moses, even over them also who have not sinned after the similitude of the transgression of Adam, who is a figure of him who was to come.

Romans, Chapter 5 v. 14

''But not as the offense, so also the gift. For if by the offense of one, many died; much more the grace of God, and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

v. 15

''And not as it was by one sin, so also is the gift. For judgment indeed was by one unto condemnation; but grace is of many offenses unto justification.

v. 16

''For if by one man's offense death reigned through one; much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift, and of justice, shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ.

v. 17

''Therefore, as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justification of life.

v. 18

'' 'For as by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one, many shall be made just' '' (Rom. V, 14-19).

v. 19

In these words Saint Paul makes the guilt of mankind from Adam's sin just as lucidly clear as Adam's loss of justice and all the original gifts is made lucidly clear by the narrative of Genesis. The Saint's first purpose is to glorify Christ, not to reproach Adam; but he sets off the benefit which one brought against the loss which the other brought. Go over his message verse by verse. The language is a little

Purpose of St. Paul

Exegetical paraphrase

difficult because it is the translation of a very different tongue from ours.

Up to the time of Moses there was from Adam's time no set law for the people of God with a death-penalty for certain offenses. But, in spite of that, all, even holy men, were condemned to die because they had inherited the character (similitude) of sinners from Adam's sin. Adam is like (is a figure of) Christ because he alone afflicted the whole human race with death as Christ alone endowed the human race with life.

v. 14

But Christ gave more than Adam took away; for if a multitude died for Adam's guilt, a multitude were also endowed with plentiful graces by Christ.

v. 15

The same thought is repeated: Christ gave more than Adam took away; for in Adam all are guilty, in Christ all become just.

v. 16

In the next three verses the Apostle repeats as if he could not say it often enough, death from Adam, life from Christ; guilt from Adam, justification from Christ; sinners through Adam, just through Christ.

v. 17, 18, 19

Fathers and the Councils

The Fathers with one voice teach the same doctrine so that it is not necessary to quote them, nor is it necessary to quote the other Councils and decrees of the Church. It is perfectly clear from God's revealed teaching that we inherit in some way the guilt and the sin of our first father.

Explanation of inherited guilt deferred

The next point to deal with would naturally seem to be to explain how the guilt of someone else's sin with which I had nothing whatever to do can possibly in justice be shared by me. But we shall leave the explanation of this to the next chapter in which we take up the exact nature of original sin. What we shall consider now is the punishment of Adam's sin as visited on his children.

We do not share the remorse of Adam

It is often said that sin is its own punishment. That is, the remorse and self-accusation that stings and haunts the sinner is one of the worst things he has to suffer. This punishment, at least, we do not get from the sin of the first man.

It must have been no small part of Adam's punishment, especially when he turned his longing eyes back towards the bright garden and the happy life that he had brought to a close. But the other part of Adam's punishment was the loss of all his supernatural gifts. These we too have lost from the first to the last. Consider them.

First comes the gift of sanctifying grace. We are all born without it. It is true this gift can be won back in different ways—either by contrition or by Baptism or in some other way which will be treated of when we come to deal with the Sacrament of Baptism. But if it is not somehow won back we shall pass the whole of eternity without it, whether we have committed any personal sins or not. And it can never be won back without the aid of the merits of Christ. We can at once argue that it must be a great gift indeed which cannot be recovered without the personal aid of the Son of God.

We lose sanctifying grace

Then Adam was immortal; we live in the very shadow of death. Adam was free from concupiscence; we labor under its stings like St. Paul who said, "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind . . ." (Rom. VII, 23). Adam was replenished with wisdom and learning and strength of will; we are born in ignorance and what little learning we can acquire is only through bitter toil and the strongest of us admits, if he is honest, how pitiably weak is the nature that he wears. Adam was free from sorrow and sickness of every kind; our life has well been called a vale of tears and for us to grow older is to know more of sorrow and pain either in ourselves or in our fellow men. The truth of all this needs no proof whatever. But it does need some justification. How can it be fair that I should suffer for what someone else did?

We lose all preternatural gifts

It is true that there are some exceptions to the general inheritance of this loss from Adam. Just as there have been some very few who were born with sanctifying grace,* so

Some exceptions

* We refer, of course, to our Blessed Lady who was conceived immaculate as will be later treated, and to St. John the Baptist and the Prophet Jeremias and (as many believe) St. Joseph who were *born* with sanctifying grace.

there have been some who have been freed from concupiscence; and there have been some who have been gifted with superior knowledge from God and there may even be some exceptions to the law of death. But there is no one who has not inherited *some* of the loss that Adam caused by his sin. And, besides, the exceptions mentioned are exceptions. They prove the existence of a rule according to which we are all condemned to cruel privations both in our body and in our soul. How can we justify this as coming from God Who "renders to every man according to his works"?

How is this loss justified?

The answer to this question is contained in the one word "supernatural." All the things which Adam lost were supernatural, every one of them. They are, as we saw when we defined the meaning of the word, in no way owing to our nature.

Such gifts in no way due our nature

It is according to the nature of man to be subject to death. Our soul by its activity wears out the body and the body by its very nature grows weary of renewing itself and finally can keep the soul no longer. So it is according to the nature of man to feel concupiscence, because of the two sets of faculties which he has, one sensuous and the other spiritual. Again it is natural for man to suffer sickness and pain for the world about us is filled with forces which are unfriendly to our health and our comfort and our very incomplete knowledge of them makes them all the more dangerous. So ignorance is natural to us. We are made so as to start life with no knowledge at all and, though we have wonderful powers for gaining knowledge, we can only learn one thing at a time and many things must remain unknown. We have a right to what our nature demands to make us essentially *men*. But we have no right whatever to other gifts, whether supernatural or preternatural.

Death and concupiscence

Sickness, sorrow, ignorance

To take an example from irrational beings, would a mouse be justified in saying, if it could, "I have been wronged because my creator has *deprived me* of wings like yonder eagle?" We should justly answer the mouse, "Your creator

Comparison of a mouse

has deprived you of nothing. It is not *your nature* to have wings. That is all." And if the mouse went on arguing that it was much nicer to be made with wings, we could argue no more with it. Such talk is foolishness. It brings us nowhere and is worthy only of a mouse.

So in the same way we might argue that it would have been much better to have been created an angel. For in that case, besides being freed by our nature from concupiscence, we should possess by our nature very superior faculties of thinking and of obtaining knowledge. This all may be true enough; but have we any right to complain that we have been unjustly treated in not having been created angels?

Can we justly envy the angelic nature?

The objection may be raised here, "But these gifts which I lack Adam had. Does not that give me some kind of a right to them?"

None whatever, any more than if they were in the possession of any other man or any other being. Remember the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Did the master do an injustice when after paying some of the hired men the fair price for which he had contracted with them, he chose out of his liberality to give more for their work to the other laborers?

"But," the objector will go on, "Adam was my first father. Does not that give me a right by inheritance to the things he had?

Have we the natural right of inheritance?

Yes, you would have a right to them if Adam had earned them and then bequeathed them to you. But Adam did not earn them. They were given to him by the free bounty of God.

"But were they not given to be handed on to me?"

Ah! there is the point of the whole matter. If these gifts had been settled on Adam by God to be passed on to his rightful children without any condition whatever, then we would assuredly have a right to them for we are his rightful children. But this is precisely what God did not do. He settled those gifts on Adam to remain with him and with

Inheritance was made conditional

his children after him on *condition* that Adam was faithful to His command. Adam was unfaithful and so the gifts were withdrawn from Adam and from his children. If you complain as some do, that you cannot see the fairness of this, attend to the following comparison.

Comparison

A man of tremendous wealth calls a poor laboring man up to see him and says to him, "If you will do this rather difficult job for me, I will give you ten thousand dollars. This is very large pay for such a service but I can do as I wish with my own money. And in order to show you how much this service means to me, if you finish it faithfully, I will settle ten thousand dollars on each of your children. I will do more than that. I will settle ten thousand dollars on each of your grandchildren, no matter how many they may come to be. You know that my wealth is boundless and that I can and will do what I say." Then let us suppose that for some unaccountable reason the laboring man goes off and fails to do the work that was to have so extraordinary a reward. He marries, however, and has children and, in the course of time, grandchildren. And years after this conversation took place one of the grandchildren hears of the agreement which his grandfather had with the rich man. He seeks out the rich man who is still living and addresses him as follows, "I am the grandson of so and so with whom you once made an agreement." Then he tells him what he heard. "You have heard correctly," says the rich man, "What have you to say about it?" "I want the ten thousand dollars," says the other, "which you promised to me before I was born." "But, my friend," says the rich man, "I only promised that money to you on condition that your grandfather was faithful. And he wasn't faithful." Would the grandson be able to answer with anything like justice or common sense, "You have wronged me, sir, in letting me lose something without any fault of mine"? Could not the rich man answer that what he had promised was promised out of the purest liberality to the man's grandfather and nothing else?

It is clear, then, from our merest common sense that God has in no way wronged mankind in the gifts withdrawn from Adam and his descendants.

With regard to death and concupiscence and the other hardships which make life so real a battle, we must bear in mind that, although they are the natural consequence of our state as men made up of soul and body in the midst of a material world, still their presence has a real connection with a grievous sin in the past. It is as if the hideousness of one deliberate offense against God is painted in flaring colors on every page of the history of time and cried out by all the woes of time.*

Evils of life are reminders of the first sin

It is very hard to describe what would have been the exact state of the world if Adam had never fallen from innocence. It is commonly thought that there would not be any physical evil in the world even among the brute creation, certainly not within the sight of man so as to cause him vexation or sorrow. How much sin there would be in the world it is impossible to say since sin depends on the free choice of man. The common teaching is that sin would have been as possible with the descendants of Adam as it was for him and every

World without the first sin

* Cardinal Newman has very powerfully amplified this thought as follows:
"To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of man, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship; their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths, the progress of things as from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes, the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race, so fearfully yet exactly described in the Apostle's words, 'having no hope and without God in the world,'—all this is a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.
"What shall be said to this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer, that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is in a true sense discarded from His presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the tokens on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birth-place or his family connexions, I should conclude that there was some mystery connected with his history, and that he was one, of whom, for one cause or another, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and the condition of his being. And so I argue about the world:—*if* there be a God, *since* there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purpose of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God" (Apol. pro Vita Sua, c. 5).

man at some time of his life in the world would have had at least one trial, a chance to choose between God and self.

God's love increased with man's sin

It would be a great mistake to say that when the first man sinned, God turned away and regarded men with less love than before. On the contrary he turned towards man with greater love than before. For He promised man a Redeemer and from that moment the merits of Christ began to flow out upon the world.

Opportunity for glorifying God is not lessened by the afflictions of life

Nor is it correct to say that we could have given God more glory if we had remained in the possession of all the supernatural gifts which were taken from our nature. The principal gift which Adam lost, sanctifying grace, was placed within Adam's reach and within the reach of every man since him. Then, by the aid of the grace of Christ, we can subdue concupiscence, as many have done, by a very glorious victory. Finally as regards the other afflictions of life, they can one and all be the means of giving a peculiar glory to God such as was impossible for Adam in his state of innocence—the glory of struggle. So it is by no means certain that there would have been in the world, if Adam had not fallen, as great saints as there have been. Christ when He came could not put off sanctifying grace from His human nature nor could His sacred body be subject to concupiscence. This would be unworthy of the Son of God Who also required that His human mind and will should be replenished with gifts above those given to Adam. With all this it is true that Christ took on Himself all the other afflictions that fell upon our nature on account of the fall, even including death. By Christ's taking them they became in a true sense glorious.

Christ assumed the afflictions of fallen nature

Compare fallen with unfallen nature

We can compare the two states of human nature, one with and the other without the fall of Adam. Compare them as if existing down to the present day and see in which of them there is greater love of God for men in evidence.

If our nature were innocent and unfallen we can see God watching over it keeping away from it anything that could possibly interfere with its peace, keeping all the material

world around man in the most perfect harmony. Time would move along like music. That would certainly be a work of constant watchful love on the part of God. Then we can see life as it is, man at odds with the world around him so that he has to struggle to live. And time as it moves along is like anything but music. But into the midst of time Christ Himself has leaped down. He shares the burdens of time with us, He shows the wounds of time. In this second state God is showing much greater love than in the first. Christ gives us back far more than Adam lost.

God's love is greater in the first state

And so the presence of moral evil in the world remains a mystery that human intelligence will seek in vain for a solution of. But if we look steadily at the love of God manifested by the presence everywhere in the sinful world of the grace of Christ, we shall not desire any solution.

Mystery of evil no longer clamors for a solution

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Show why no sin of Eve nor of any descendant of Adam would have had the same effects as the sin of Adam.
2. Prove that we are guilty of the sin of Adam.
3. What part of the punishment of Adam's sin is not shared by us?
4. What exceptions are there to the loss of all the preternatural gifts of Adam?
5. How is God justified in punishing us for the sin of another?
6. Show by a comparison the plan of God with regard to the inheritance of Adam's gifts.
7. Why is concupiscence the natural due of our nature?
8. Are death and concupiscence true signs of guilt?
9. Show how an unfallen world would show God's love less.
10. How did Christ make the afflictions of life glorious?

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATURE OF ORIGINAL SIN

We have seen that the sin of Adam in a true sense passed to his descendants so that they are called in the language both of Scripture and Tradition "sinners." We now come to consider how this is, or, in other words, to examine the precise nature of original sin, not as committed by Adam but as present in the rest of mankind.

We are not responsible for another's sin

It must be clear in the beginning that the fundamental ideas that we have of justice must apply to God in His dealings with men. Hence we cannot admit that Adam's children could be guilty of his sin in the same way that he was guilty of it. We have, indeed, heard of a man being so angry with some other man for some wrong which he had received from him that he pursued with vengeance his entire family, considered them all as guilty and did not rest till they were blotted out. But such a proceeding is full of human wickedness and passion and is no comparison for the action of God. Besides, we have seen that far from pursuing mankind with vengeance after the fall of Adam, God pursued them with increasing love.

Still we are guilty in our nature

Still, though it is true that God did not pursue the human race with vengeance, He did withdraw from them certain gifts which He had settled on them in the beginning, on the condition of Adam's fidelity. It is true that Adam by God's arrangement stood for the whole human race, not merely as their father and their head but also as their representative. All mankind stood before God with Adam in the time of his trial and just as, if the first man had been faithful, mankind would have appeared beautiful to God's eye, clothed with those fair gifts which then were theirs by right, so, when the

first man was unfaithful, mankind appeared despoiled of beauty. This is all true in a strict sense since God sees all time at once. But the question still comes, why are we all called sinners in Adam's sin? For so we *are* called both in the Scripture and in Tradition.

What makes us guilty?

It is well to state that this question is a vexed one among theologians. The Church has not put her absolute seal on the solution. But we shall give at the end the solution at which the majority of theologians with St. Thomas Aquinas have arrived.

A vexed question

Let us review the different opinions.

Some would hold that all men are sinners in Adam inasmuch as they imitate the sin of Adam by their own sins. This solution we can reject at once as the Church rejects it. For it is more than clear that in such a case the share in Adam's sin would depend entirely on personal sin. There would be no real connection with his sin and, besides, those who live lives without grievous sin as well as those who died in their infancy would have no share at all.

Guilty by imitation?

Others hold that we are called sinners because we looked like sinners, stripped as we were to God's eye of our supernatural gifts. This answer comes nearer the truth. But we ask at once what gift it was the loss of which made us look like sinners to the eye of God Who sees things not as they look but as they really are.

We appear as sinners?

Others hold that we are merely *called* sinners by what is known as "imputation," that is, just as a man who hates the father of a family for his villainy calls the whole family villains though there is nothing whatever in them to merit such a name. This opinion as it stands is heretical. God does not give a name without a reasonable cause. In as far as the opinion is not heretical it leaves the question to be answered, what there is actually in mankind to merit the name of sinner.

Sinners by imputation?

The different answers to this last question make up a new list of opinions.

Sinners because subject to death?

Some say that man is called a sinner because his nature is stripped of the gift of immortality and is condemned to death. This is to be rejected at once. Death can be called the penalty of sin but there is nothing in death which makes one a sinner. On the contrary, for good people death means their union with God.

Subject to concupiscence?

Others say that man is called a sinner because he is stripped of the gift of integrity or freedom from concupiscence and so his nature is stained with this "fuel of sin." This opinion also has received the condemnation of the Church. Concupiscence has in no way the character of a sin, though, like death, it may be called the penalty of sin.

We come now to give the true solution to our difficulty. But before we do let us examine into the definition of what sin is.

Essence of sin

Sin is the deliberate turning away from God. This is done by a single act. But we can also consider the state of a man who has turned away from God and has never turned back again. This is called *habitual sin.* Habitual sin is the result of an actual sin and it, clearly, depends on actual sin for its existence. It also depends on some kind of an act for its removal. For until a man who is guilty of habitual sin turns back to God, he is still stained by the same habitual sin.

Habitual and actual sin

Original sin must be habitual

Now it is perfectly clear that original sin as it exists in mankind after Adam is not an actual sin. If it is a sin at all it must be habitual sin. And this is precisely what it is. Mankind by the sin of Adam is stained with habitual sin. They are in a true sense turned away from God and so they remain until they turn back to God, until they turn away from Adam who stains them and takes hold, as it were, of Christ Who redeemed them.

What makes us habitual sinners?

But these are all mere words unless we can show something in mankind which actually turns them away from God. And we can show such a thing. It is the loss of sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace is a gift fixed upon the soul which turns

the soul to God in a very special way. It raises man to the supernatural order and gives him a right to a supernatural end. Therefore the loss of this gift in a true sense turns man away from God. It is by the loss of sanctifying grace, then, that mankind is truly stained with habitual sin, since it is habitually turned away from God. And so in a true, though in a particular sense, mankind can be said to have sinned in Adam. For our nature stood before God with Adam and when Adam by a deliberate act deprived himself of sanctifying grace he deprived our nature of it also. Then our nature appeared to the eye of God as sinful, not because it was liable to death, not because it was subject to concupiscence, not because it was stripped of all the other gifts which made it bright and beautiful, but only because it was deprived of that supernatural gift which turned it towards Him and thus was truly turned away from Him.

Loss of sanctifying grace

Supernatural aversion from God

The question suggests itself: "Doesn't every kind of sin have to be voluntary? How can this turning away from God, which is original sin, be sin in any true sense when I personally did not will it, when, in fact, I had nothing to do with it whatever?"

This aversion voluntary in Adam

The answer is to recall what was said about the difference between actual sin and habitual sin. Original sin in us is not actual but habitual. Habitual sin is voluntary but not on account of a present act of the will but on account of a past act. If a man commits a deliberate mortal sin he turns himself away from God by that act. And he remains turned away from God for five, ten, twenty or thirty years until he turns himself back—all on account of that single act. Now our nature was turned away from God by Adam's deliberate act. And so our nature is guilty of habitual sin which is voluntary, not by any act of ours but by the voluntary act of our first father.

The only objection which remains is to explain how it is just that the act of another should thus turn my nature away

How is this just?

from God and make me, in a certain sense, appear guilty before God.

No natural aversion from God

The answer is to recall what we said about a supernatural gift. It was in no way due to our nature that we should be turned towards God in this very special way. We all have in our nature the power of turning to God as our supreme good. This comes from our natural faculties of understanding and will. No sin of another could take this power away from us. And if we embrace God with these faculties, no sin of another could turn us away from Him, and we should remain *habitually* turned towards Him, though only in a *natural* way. But sanctifying grace turns us towards God in a way that our natural faculties are incapable of doing. It makes us sons of God, sharers of the divine nature with a right to see Him face to face. Such a gift we could lose and did lose by the sin of another.

This solution not revealed but highly probable from its authority

As we said before, this explanation of the nature of original sin has been accomplished by the long discussion of theologians lasting through centuries. It cannot be called *revealed*. But it has come to be the prevailing opinion in the Church with the authority of the great St. Thomas behind it. In fact most of the opinions which disagree with it are either heresy or else they are a different expression of what, in the last analysis, comes very close to being the same doctrine as ours.

As for the proof, we can show that the words of the infallible Church on this matter bear the meaning that we have given better than any other.

Fits the Councils and the Scripture

For instance, the Council of Orange says: "Sin, which is the death of the soul, passed upon all the human race through one man." Therefore the "death of the soul" passed to all men. But this most naturally means the loss of sanctifying grace; for by this and by this alone the soul is said to die to the supernatural life. Again, the Council of Trent said: "Men would not have been born unjust unless they had been born in direct line from the seed of Adam . . ." But to be born "unjust" most naturally means "born without sanctify-

ing grace," since this same grace is the justice of the supernatural life. Finally the same Council goes on in the same place, "So unless men are born again in Christ, they could never be justified, since that rebirth is given to them through the merit of His passion by that grace by which they become just." Now this grace by which men are reborn in Christ is sanctifying grace and nothing else. Hence it is this which takes away original sin or restores that the loss of which *is* original sin.

St. Anselm

The great St. Anselm among the Fathers can be said to stand as the founder of our teaching. He says: "This sin which I call original I cannot understand in infants to be anything else than the stripping (i.e., from their human nature) of that due justice which I mentioned above and which was caused by the disobedience of Adam" (De Concept. Virg. et Pecc. Orig., c. 27). What he means by "due justice" is that justice which would have been our rightful possession if the first man had been faithful. And this is sanctifying grace which makes us just in the *supernatural order*. The particular point to be noted is that if God had simply created Adam and clothed his nature with sanctifying grace and had not associated the whole of the human race with Adam and with his trial, then the privation of that grace in us, unless it were lost by our own personal act, could not be called guilt or sin in us. One of the ancient theologians (Alexander of Hales, ab. 1200) says very wisely, "The mere fact that a thing is without grace does not make it sinful. For in that case a stone would be sinful." But because in God's plan the whole human race stood with Adam clothed with sanctifying grace until Adam cast this grace away by his deliberate act, therefore, the whole human race became unjust before God when they lost the supernatural gift that made them just.

Alexander of Hales

We stood before God with Adam

Our argument from the Scripture simply consists in dwelling on the words "sin" and "sinners" which are so frequently used by St. Paul, as we have seen, in speaking of the inheritance of Adam's fall by the whole human race. Sin,

we say, is nothing else than a turning away from God and we can only become stained with habitual sin, that is to say, established in a state of aversion from God, by the loss of that which turns towards God.

St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas is called the Prince of Theologians and his authority in this question is our best support, than which in the field of theological opinion we can have no better. Let us take a quotation from his teaching: "The disorderly character of the other powers of our soul is especially noticeable in this, that they incline in a disorderly way towards a perishable good; and this disorderliness can be called by the common name of concupiscence. And so original sin materially considered is concupiscence, but *formally* it is the loss of original justice" (Sum. Theol., I, II, q. 82, a. 3). The eminent theologians who came after St. Thomas interpret this teaching thus. What he means by "original sin materially considered" is the *material element* in original sin. This last is some positive tendency in our fallen nature away from God. Such a tendency can only be found in our sense appetites which go towards their object without the direction of reason. This is an effect of original sin, since if mankind had not been turned from their supernatural end this tendency would have been taken away by the gift of integrity. But the great Doctor plainly says that the formality (i.e., the very essence) of original sin is the loss of original justice which is the privation of sanctifying grace (cf. Suarez, De Vitiis et Pecc., disp., 9, sect. 2; Bellarmine, De Amiss. Grat., L. 5).

Suarez and Bellarmine

Duns Scotus, one of the greatest of the theologians of the Middle Ages after St. Thomas, agrees with the teaching of Aquinas which we have made our own. He writes as follows:

Duns Scotus

"I say, therefore, that original sin, which is the lack of original justice, is nothing else than the lack of justice which is due us (i.e., that is, which is due us by God's original plan). And if it is objected that certain saints (i.e., like Saint Augustine) seem to hold that concupiscence is original

sin, I answer that concupiscence can be taken either as an act or a habit or tendency in the sensitive appetite; and in none of those ways is it formally a sin, for there is no such thing as a sin in our sensuous nature. Or it can be taken as a tendency in the rational appetite, that is, in the will, to desire delightful things immoderately; for the will tends by its nature to share the pleasure of the sensitive appetite to which it is joined. And in this manner concupiscence is the material element of original sin, because by the lack of original justice which was, as it were, the bridle restraining the will from immoderate pleasure, the will itself becomes inclined to immoderate desires not positively but by the lack of that very restraint.

"And so, to come to the point, the second question in which it is asked what original sin is, is solved in this way. It is formally the lack of original justice which is due us, and yet not due us in every sense because it was conferred on our first father and by him lost; and that loss was for him (Adam) a punishment for his criminal transgression. And so Adam did not have original sin (i.e., in the way that we have it) because that lack was not bequeathed to him by another parent. But he himself received that justice and lost it by his own act" (In II Sent., d. 32, q. unica, n. 37).

TEST QUESTIONS

1. In what sense is it impossible that the sin of Adam should be imputed to us?
2. Why are we not rendered guilty of Adam's sin by imitation?
3. Why not by imputation?
4. Why are neither death nor concupiscence capable of constituting us sinners in the sight of God?
5. What is the difference between actual and habitual sin?
6. Why does the loss of sanctifying grace truly make us sinners?
7. Why could we not be turned from God *naturally* by the sin of Adam?
8. Why is there no offense of justice in this effect of Adam's sin?
9. Show that this explanation fits the Councils and the Scripture.
10. How can we be said to have stood before God with Adam?

CHAPTER XVII

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Meaning of conception

By "conception" we mean the beginning of the existence of a human being, body and soul together. We shall see more in the chapters to come concerning the origin of the human soul and the time of its infusion into the body. It is enough to say here that whenever that joint existence begins the existence begins of that rational animal or man, and that is what we mean here by conception.

Original sin

In the previous chapters on original sin we saw that we have explicit revelation for the truth that every human being inherits from Adam from the first moment of his (or her) existence the guilt of the primeval fall, unless we have explicit revelation to the contrary.

Human nature of Christ could not be stained with original sin

Christ Our Lord, as we shall see in another treatise more fully, could not be stained with original sin in His human nature on account of the dignity of His divine personality. His human nature had a right to sanctifying grace, being the nature taken upon Himself by a divine person. But even aside from this fact it is commonly taught that Christ needed

Nor did He need exemption

no privilege to exempt His human nature from this stain since the stain could only come by descent through the paternal line and Christ had no human father.

Other persons born immaculate; Mary alone conceived so

As we have mentioned, there is revelation in the Scripture that John the Baptist was freed from the stain of original sin while he was yet in his mother's womb and the same is true of the prophet Jeremias.* But only of one person besides Christ Himself is it revealed that she was conceived

* ". . . and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb" (Luke I, 15). ". . . before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee" (Jerem. I, 5).

immaculate, that is, that she began her existence as a human being without ever having the stain of original sin.

We saw in the last chapter that the precise nature of original sin is decided by the best theologians to be the loss of sanctifying grace but that this teaching has not as yet the supreme seal of the Church. But it is expressly revealed that Our Lady never had the stain of this sin and that she was clothed with sanctifying grace from the beginning.

Never without sanctifying grace

It must be noted carefully that this privilege given to Christ's mother was given through the merits of Christ Himself. If it be objected that Christ could not merit before He was born, the answer is simply that He could and did merit before He was born. The Church expressly teaches that Adam's recovery of sanctifying grace after his fall was due to the merits of Christ, without Whose merits this grace, in God's plan would have remained irrecoverable forever. If, then, Christ could merit the gift of grace for others up to the time of His Mother, He could surely merit grace for her.

Merits of Christ were anticipated

There is no doctrine of the Church more clearly taught than this. For on the 8th of December, 1854, Pope Pius IX, after going carefully into the history of the doctrine ended with the following declaration in which he used the plenitude of his infallible authority:

Definition of Pius IX

"Unto the honor and glory of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, unto the adorning and ennobling of the Virgin Mother of God, unto the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and the fostering of the Christian Religion, by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and by our own authority, we declare, we pronounce and we define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception was by the singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of the human race, preserved free from all stain of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God, and therefore to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful. Wherefore, if any should pre-

sume to think in their hearts the contrary of that which has been by us defined, which may God avert, let them know and be sure that in their own thought they are condemned, that they have suffered shipwreck of their faith and have fallen away from the unity of the Church, and, furthermore, by that very act of theirs have made themselves subject to the penalties fixed by law if they should dare to manifest either by word or writing or in any other external way that which they think in their hearts."

As to the argument for this doctrine from Scripture, the texts which teach the unique motherhood of Our Lady, that is, according to which she is a mother at once and a virgin, so that from her sacred womb alone came the body of Christ the Son of God, can be said to point towards the doctrine though not, of course, to teach it.

Scripture

The Gospel of St. Luke comes nearer when it gives the salutation with which the angel addressed her, "Hail, full of grace!" (Luke I, 28). This is understood by the Fathers to indicate a fullness of grace with which the least stain of any kind of sin would be incompatible.

Classical text of Genesis

But the classical text is in the Book of Genesis. It comes immediately after Adam and his wife have been forced to confess their deliberate sin of disobedience—how they listened to the serpent rather than to God. Thereupon God curses the serpent, first the mere crawling animal which the devil had made the instrument of his temptation of Eve. Then God directs His words to the evil spirit himself, who has, in only too true a sense, scored a triumph against God.

Enmities between Satan and the woman

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. III, 15).

This text wonderfully unfolds itself if we look at it carefully. First, it comes before the announcement of the punishment of the guilty ones. God's love cannot wait. It thrusts itself in before His just anger. Then, the "woman" mentioned cannot be Eve. Upon her and from her come

only the sorrows that are pronounced in the next verse. And they are sorrows that are peculiar to her sex and which women have labored under in tears ever since: "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power and he shall have dominion over thee." * The word "woman," therefore, can only refer to some woman who stands apart in the history of the race for being *against the serpent*. "And I will put enmities between thee and the woman," that is, "I will make the woman an arch-enemy of thine."

The text goes on, "between thy seed and her seed," that is, "between thy offspring and her offspring." Now we know that the devil has no offspring in the ordinary sense. All that he has ever produced is sin and nothing else. Therefore the seed of the serpent means the works of the evil one. But the seed of the woman means the child of that woman who stands out among all women as the enemy of Satan.

Jews and Christians recognized passage as Messianic

From the very earliest times the Jews who preserved and cherished the Old Testament down to the time of Christ looked upon this text as a promise of the Messias. And the Christian Church did the same after them. Christ then is the seed of the woman between whom and the serpent, God will "put enmities."

Notice that when in the very beginning of revelation the Messias is mentioned, His Mother is mentioned with Him. We should consider also that God could have become man from a human father and mother, or from a human father alone or without the aid of either father or mother. But He deliberately chose to be owing for His human body to His one true Mother and to her alone. And He tenderly announces this just before He announces the sorrows of womankind.

We come to the rest of the text, "she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." Here many inter-

* The question may naturally be asked whether, if Adam had not sinned, woman would not have been subject to man the natural head in the family. Yes, she would have; but it would have been a sweet subjection, without tyranny on the one side and rebellion on the other.

preters of the Scripture read "*he* or *it* shall crush thy head," that is, they make the reference to the child of the woman, or Christ, Who will crush the head of the serpent. This would seem at first to weaken the proving power of our passage. But it is not so. In any case the crushing of the serpent's head expresses the complete victory of Christ over the powers of evil and whatever triumph His Mother accomplishes can only be through Him. But His Mother's triumph is mentioned together with His. Else why is she mentioned at all? Above all why is she foretold as the one woman who is to be the arch-enemy of the devil? There must be something like and parallel in the triumph of Son and Mother. And the only perfect parallel is the utter sinlessness of both Christ and His Mother—He by right of His divinity, she by privilege merited by Him. And so this passage points to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, since without this she would not have been completely sinless and so would not have scored a complete triumph against the enemy of mankind. The argument gathers in power when we consider that God's prediction about the "woman" was made to the devil at the very time of the devil's triumph over mankind by which he had succeeded in stripping them of original justice. Unless "the woman," therefore, is an exception to this universal stripping, she is actually a part of the devil's triumph over mankind and the devil's triumph cannot be said to be reversed in her.

"Crush thy head"

She must share in the complete triumph of her Son

The Fathers again and again show in their writings that they understand the "woman" in the above passage to be the Mother of Christ. They constantly contrast the first with the second Eve, from one of whom came death and from the other salvation. It must be admitted, however, they refer this passage rather to the indirect triumph of Mary, that is, her triumph through her Son, than to her personal triumph, which was still, as we know, only through the merits of her Son. Thus St. Irenaeus says, "The seed which was destined to crush his (i.e., the devil's) head was the offspring

The Fathers read "woman" of Mary

of Mary'' (Adv. Haeret., L. 3, c. 22). And St. Justin, ''Through this woman He was born through Whom God puts to flight both the serpent and the angels and men who are become like unto him (i.e., the serpent)'' (Dial. c. Tryph., n. 1000).

But when the Fathers speak of the Blessed Virgin alone by herself, they cannot seem to find words enough for the expression of her spotless purity, her utter sinlessness. The equivalent of ''immaculate conception'' is many times uttered of her, though not in the measured sense of theology.

Testimony of the Fathers on the stainlessness of Mary

Origen (185) calls Mary ''worthy of God, immaculate of the immaculate, most complete sanctity, perfect justice, neither deceived by the persuasion of the serpent, nor infected with his poisonous breathings'' (Hom. 1, in diversa).

St. Hippolytus (ab. 200) calls her ''the tabernacle exempt from defilement and corruption'' (Orat. in illud Dominus pascit me).

St. Ambrose (ab. 350), ''incorrupt, a virgin immune through grace from every stain of sin'' (Serm. XXII in Ps. CXVIII).

St. Theodotus of Ancyra (ab. 300), '' . . . a virgin innocent, without spot . . . untaught the ills of Eve . . . nor was there any communion in her of light with darkness, and, when not yet born she was consecrated to God'' (Orat. in S. Dei Genitr.).

St. Augustine (354), declaring that all the just have truly known of sin ''except the holy Virgin Mary, of whom, for the honor of the Lord, I will have no question whatever where sin is concerned'' (De Nat. et Grat., c. XXXVI).

St. Peter Chrysologus (400), ''Mary was pledged to Christ in the womb when she was made'' (Serm. CXI de Annuntiat. B. V. M.).

St. Sabas (ab. 450), '' . . . it is sure and it is well known that she was pure from eternity, exempt from every defect'' (Typicon).

St. Proclus (ab. 450), " . . . she was formed without any stain" (Laudat. in S. Dei Gen., 1, 3).

St. Ephraem (ab. 325), "Most holy Lady, Mother of God, alone most pure in soul and body, alone exceeding all perfection of purity . . . alone made in thy entirety the home of all the graces of the Most Holy Spirit, and hence exceeding beyond compare all the angelic virtues in soul and body. . . . My Lady most holy, all-pure, all-immaculate, all-stainless, all-undefiled, all-incorrupt, all-inviolate . . . spotless robe of Him Who clothes Himself with light as with a garment . . . flower unfading, purple woven by God, alone most immaculate" (Precat. ad Deiparam).

Doctrine in the mind of the Church from the beginning

These passages which are only a few among many show, in the light of what we now know, that the truth of the Immaculate Conception was in the *living mind* of the Church in the earliest times, though the Church had not as yet turned towards it with exact theological definition. We shall touch on this point again later on.

The proof of the doctrine must, of course, suppose the revelation of those truths from which we can argue. Supposing these, the argument is very convincing.

Intrinsic probability of the doctrine

First, how could Christ Who could do all things, withhold from His Mother any privilege that was suitable for her? Again,—How could He sanctify the Baptist, His precursor in his mother's womb and not do more for His own Mother? How could God bestow on Eve what He would withhold from Mary whose dignity was so much higher? Finally, how could Christ permit that His Mother should in any way or at any time be a part of the triumph of Satan over mankind, that she should be in any way or at any time *His enemy?* And yet all these things would be true if we do not admit the Immaculate Conception. God's enemy is one who has in any way departed from perfect friendship with Him. And one whose nature has lost the gift of original justice has so departed.

His Mother's privilege should be supreme

A stronger argument is drawn from the dignity of Christ.

Could the Son of God, one God with the Father and the Holy Ghost, have taken the nature that He would make His own from a being whose nature was tainted with the stain of sin?

Dignity of Christ

The question may quite naturally be asked why the strength of these reasons did not appeal to the Church at an earlier date, since it was not until the year 1854 that the Church declared the doctrine to be a part of the message which Christ had given her to keep.

Why was definition delayed?

The answer to this is that the mere likelihood of a truth in itself is far from being enough to make the Church declare it a part of revelation. We should recall what was said in a previous chapter about the completeness of the revelation which was given to the Church in the beginning. When the Church is considering the definition of a truth she does not look to God for new revelation. She looks to Him indeed for guidance and illumination; but her eye is always turned back, back on the past when the fullness of revelation was given to her.

Truth must be part of explicit revelation

But again the question comes—why, if the Immaculate Conception of Christ's Mother was explicitly revealed to the Apostles and preached by them, was it so many centuries before the Church awoke to a realization of it? Why was it not known and professed by all Christians from the beginning uninterruptedly down to the present time, like the doctrine that Christ was truly God?

Must have been explicitly believed. Why not taught?

In order to answer this we must once more recall what was said in a previous chapter about the way in which the revelation or the message of Christ was delivered. It was given first by Christ complete to the Apostles. But it was not delivered by the Apostles exclusively to a body of teachers in the Church and by this body of teachers to be handed exclusively to another body of teachers. The whole revealed message was given to the whole Church, the teachers and the taught, and by the whole Church it was received and by the whole Church it was handed down. It is true that the

Revelation delivered to teachers and taught

bishops of the Church, with the Pope the chief bishop at their head, had the duty and the authority from Christ to watch that the message remained uncorrupted. It is also true that all the bishops together with the Pope at their head were infallible in declaring what was or what was not a part of that message. But it was not true that any particular bishop, not even any particular Pope was in conscious personal possession of the whole message as the Apostles were. It is not even true that the whole message was necessarily a conscious *personal* possession of all the bishops together in any age of the Church previous to the definition, though they were always infallible when it came to defining it. But it was always in the *conscious* possession of the whole Church, the teachers and the taught together, in every age of the Church from the beginning. In fact the Popes and the bishops can be reckoned as a part of the *taught* if we consider them as receiving the message from the Apostles, just as the Apostles themselves were the taught when they received the message from Christ. And so, in like manner, the taught could be considered as teachers if we consider them as handing on the message of Christ. We must note carefully here, however, that those outside the official teachers of the Church had no authority to declare the divinity of the doctrine which they were handing down, though the doctrine was, none the less, divine.

Always a personal possession of the whole Church

Teachers and taught handed it down

In other words the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was preached by the Apostles, or at least that was preached from which the doctrine could be immediately deduced. And this part of the message of Christ may have been received by a body of listeners most of whom were not official teachers and so found its way into the heart of the Church. The doctrine could find expression in current prayers and pious expressions which would, of course, be at least tacitly approved by the Church and thus it would be handed down for generations before the eye of the teaching Church was drawn to

Doctrine preached by Apostles

Received by the taught

it and the infallible voice of the teaching Church gave it a definite authority and a definite meaning.

But could this have been the case with a doctrine like the divinity of Christ?

It evidently could not. The divinity of Christ was a doctrine which was necessary for the explicit faith of every explicit Christian. If Christ had not been God He could not have founded the Church *on His own authority,* He could not have instituted the Sacraments, He could not have saved the world by His death. The Church, in a word, from the first moment of her existence must begin all her teaching with, as she based all her authority on, the divinity of her founder. All this is just as evidently *not* true of the Immaculate Conception of Christ's Mother.

Divinity of Christ had to be explicitly taught without interruption from beginning

But it *is* true that the truth of Christ's divinity must *implicitly* shed light on the truth of His Mother's supreme dignity and on all her sublime privileges including her freedom from the stain of original sin. For if He was God, then she was the Mother of God and was clothed with a dignity above all creatures and worthy of honor above all creatures both from God and from men. The connection, however, between these two truths, namely the divinity of Christ and the Immaculate Conception of Mary, was not so close as to be what theologians call an intrinsic connection. This would mean that one could not be true without the other being true, that one could be necessarily drawn from the other. If this were so, the Immaculate Conception would have been expressly taught by the Church from the very beginning without any interruption until now. But it was not so taught, as we can see by a brief review of the history of this dogma.

This dogma illuminates the other

But is not necessarily connected with it

History of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception

In the early centuries of the Church's life there was never any question raised against the truth of the doctrine which we are considering. On the contrary, Our Lady's spotless purity was frequently proclaimed, as we have seen, by the Fathers and holy writers from the beginning. There was a Feast of the Immaculate Conception in some of the Eastern

Our Lady's purity early proclaimed

Churches as early as the seventh century. Then devotion to the Feast and to the doctrine gradually spread to the Western Church and at the end of the twelfth century it was observed by all the faithful throughout Europe.

Early Feasts

It was about this time (1150) that the doctrine was taken up and more closely examined by the great schools of philosophy and theology in Europe and then there were found for the first time great scholars who explicitly denied it. Several things must be noted, however, with regard to this remarkable fact. First, these scholars did not consider this doctrine in the light of Tradition but looked at it in itself. Thus the great St. Thomas, while he was far from wishing to deny any possible honor to Mary, did not see exactly how to reconcile this privilege of hers with the revealed truth that all human beings needed the redemption of Christ. Again, it seems clear from the study of the opinions of the great ones who opposed the dogma that they did not attach the same meaning to "conception" as was attached by the Church when it came to the definition. The Church means, as we stated in the beginning, "the first moment of the existence of Our Lady, both soul and body together." Finally, we can draw valuable reflections here on the care which the Church uses to make sure of a doctrine and those who accuse the Church of honoring Mary without limit and without warrant should consider the fact that the crown of "Immaculate" was not placed on her head by the official act of the Church until nearly two thousand years after her death.

12th century discussion

The doctrine itself, not its Tradition was disputed

Care of the Church in examining her Tradition

In the year 1305, to continue the history of the dogma, the eminent Franciscan Duns Scotus publicly defended the doctrine in the University of Paris against all opponents. He showed clearly that Our Lady did need the redemption of Christ her Son, but that she received the fruits of it *by anticipation.* From that time the veneration of the doctrine steadily grew both in the schools of theology and among the faithful until at length the Church in the person of the Supreme Pontiff Pius IX, fixing her eyes not on the present

Scotus

Definition

but on the past, declared that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was a part of the message which Christ gave to His Apostles in the beginning.

Why did not the Church define from the beginning all that was revealed?

We have seen how a revealed truth could be hidden in the heart, or, as theologians say, "in the consciousness" of the Church for a very long time without being realized to the extent of becoming the object of an explicit definition. It may still be asked why this was so. Why was not the message of Christ given so plainly in the beginning that there should be no development as to clearness of detail but every successive generation should have equal explicit knowledge with the last?

We cannot answer this question fully except to say that it was God's plan. We do know that the light of revelation never wavered and that heresies one after the other always withered and went down before it. But we can give at least two reasons in which the wisdom of God's plan appears.

Two reasons

The first is that the Church's teachers are thus compelled to look back towards the past, to the time when the message was fresh from the lips of Christ, or in the hearts of those who had known Christ, or of those who had known those who had known Christ. If the whole message had been written down with unmistakable plainness in a book, say, it would be every man's possession in the present. It would not force us back into touch with the sacred past.

The second reason is that it teaches mankind to look to that Church *which alone is in sure and infallible touch with the past.**

Preservation of Our Lady from venial sin and concupiscence

There are two other privileges of our Blessed Lady which were added to her Immaculate Conception. The first of these was her preservation by special privilege from the commission of the slightest venial sin, even from semi-deliberate venial sin. The second was her freedom from concupiscence or the "fuel of sin."

* "We must regard it as having happened, not without a special Providence, that very many truths do but lie hid implexly and adumbratively in the revealed word; viz., in order that the faithful might thence more feel the necessity of the Church's living and infallible *magisterium.*" Perrone, *Treatise on the Definableness of the Immaculate Conception of the B. V. M.*, Part II, Ch. 1.

The first is clear from the declaration of the Council of Trent. There we read:

"If anyone should say that a man once justified can through all his life avoid all even venial sins except by the special privilege of God, such as the Church holds concerning the Blessed Virgin, let him be anathema."

Trent

The second privilege is proved by the universal consent of theologians.

Both privileges are confirmed by the texts in the writings of the Fathers, such as those we gave, extolling the stainlessness of Christ's Mother; and by our reason itself when we consider that Our Lord could not allow His Mother ever to be separated in the least degree from Him or leave that in her nature which in the least way tended towards a separation from Him.

It might seem from all this that Our Lady could not have any merit of any kind since the least sin was impossible for her. This is not true as we shall see when we come to the discussion of grace. It is enough to say here that Our Lady added her own free coöperation to all that the providence of her Son accomplished in her. "He that is mighty hath done great things to me and holy is his name."

Could she merit?

It should occur to us that these three gifts of Our Lady, her Immaculate Conception and her freedom from concupiscence and venial sin make up all together a restoration of the principal gifts which were lost by the fall of Adam. It is also commonly held that wonderful preternatural gifts both of understanding and of will were showered upon her who was to be the Mother of the Son of God. Whether these gifts equalled or surpassed the similar gifts in Adam it is not easy to say with certainty, since there is no clear revelation in the matter. Certainly her dignity was immeasurably higher than Adam's.

Other gifts

But the question comes, what about the other gifts which Adam lost, his immortality, his security against all sorrow and pain of every kind? Did Christ win these back also to adorn His Mother? If He did not, and few can be ignorant

that sorrow and death were both the lot of Our Lady, then there seems to be a serious lack in the things which Christ won for His Mother, and there seems also to be a true part of the effects of Adam's sin falling upon Mary, since sorrow and, much more, death are the result of the sin of the first man.

Subject to sorrow and death

Why was this?

The answer to this difficulty is found in two considerations. Consider first the reason for the gifts that were given her. Her principal gifts were given her in order to make her union with God more perfect, in order to remove from her the least shade of sin. But the sorrows of this life and death, too, are not in themselves shades of sin. They are the means of giving glory to God, a peculiar glory which we could not otherwise give Him. And no creature ever gave God such glory from sorrow as she gave Him.

The second consideration is to look at her Son. He was secured in His human nature from every shade of sin by the right and the necessity of His divine personality. But He took upon Himself sorrow and pain and death freely. It was not, therefore, from any connection with Adam that Mary was afflicted with sorrow and death but from her connection with her Son. Not as a sharer in Adam's sin but in imitation of Christ, not as a daughter of Eve but as Mother of the Man of Sorrows was she the Mother of Sorrows.

Suffered in union with her Son

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why did not Christ need exemption from original sin?
2. How did the Baptist's privilege differ from Our Lady's?
3. How did Christ redeem His Mother?
4. Prove the doctrine from Genesis.
5. Why is the doctrine probable in itself?
6. Who received the doctrine from the Apostles?
7. How does the doctrine of the divinity of Christ differ from this doctrine?
8. How was the doctrine disputed?
9. Give two reasons why some doctrines should wait centuries for explicit definition.
10. Give the other privileges of Our Lady and say why she was subject to sorrow and death.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE HUMAN SOUL

By the soul of man we mean the principle of life in man, the principle of those actions which manifest him as a living man. It is clear from ordinary careful observation that there are different kinds of actions in every living man. A man digests his food and, at least in the first years of his life, grows. That is one kind of life. He feels with his different senses. That is another kind of life. Finally, he thinks and in his thoughts he forms objects of desire which his mere senses could never give him.

Various life in man

It is the province of philosophy to show us that there are not three principles for these three kinds of action but one principle only. But we are first concerned here with the teaching of revelation. It should be clear at once that the existence of our soul has the closest connection with the service of God. It is true that whether we have a different kind of soul from the brutes and plants or not, we are still God's creatures and owe Him service. But why then should we not serve Him as the brutes do—follow our instincts and desires and deny ourselves nothing?

Existence of soul connected with salvation

If there were two or three souls in us and one of them was over the rest, we could say, for all practical purposes, that we have one soul, that is, one supreme principle for my actions which makes me master of at least some of my actions and hence makes me responsible for some of my actions. Moreover, the "soul" in philosophy is a species of what is called a "substantial form" and about this last there are endless and intricate philosophical discussions with which revelation has nothing to do.

Revelation does, however, deal with the oneness of man's soul and with the union of this one soul with the body and that for the following reasons.

Manicheans

The Manicheans and those who followed them in later ages, held that there were two principles or souls in man, one good and the other evil, one responsible for man's good actions and the other for his bad actions. Such a teaching evidently does away with the very nature of sin.

Heresy concerning the Incarnation

There was also a prominent heretical teacher about the middle of the fourth century who held that the rational soul of man was distinct from the sensitive soul which last was the one which properly animated the body. He taught, moreover, that when Christ became man He took upon Himself man's body and therefore man's sensitive soul but not man's rational soul. The function of this last was taken by the divine nature. Such a doctrine could not be passed over by the Church, especially as it came up again later. Then

Averroës

there was an Arabian philosopher named Averroës who taught that, while man had a body and bodily life to himself, the mind of all men was one and the same Universal Mind. This is the plainest Pantheism.

Union of soul and body denied

Finally, there were some philosophers much closer to modern times who held that there was no real union between the body and the soul, nor any dependence one on the other; they simply resided next to each other and that is all. Such a doctrine attacks the dignity of man's body and points away from the truth of the body's resurrection and its share of the reward or punishment of the soul through all eternity.

We shall establish the following points with regard to the human soul:

One soul in man

First, there is in every man one supreme or dominant soul which makes him and his nature one. We neglect the question as to whether there are subordinate or subsidiary forms in man's body.

Rational soul

Second, this soul of man is rational, that is, the seat and the principle of the actions of thought and will, which are

by far the highest actions of which man is capable. These actions are in each case the man's own and no one else's.

United in one substance with the body

Third, this rational soul is united to man's body in a very close union so that soul and body together form one complete substance, one complete man. The attributes or qualities of man's soul will be discussed in the second part of the chapter.

The Fourth Council of Constantinople (869) says:

Constantinople

"It is the teaching of the Old and the New Testament that man has one rational and intellectual soul; and all the God-inspired Fathers and teachers of the Church assert the same doctrine."

The Council of Vienna (1311) decreed:

Vienna

" . . . whoever should presume henceforth to assert, defend or stubbornly to maintain that the rational or intellectual soul is not essentially and by itself the form of the human body, must be regarded as a heretic." This expression that the soul is "the form of the human body," is the assertion in philosophical terms of the close union of soul and body to make one substance.

There is also a letter of Pope Pius IX to the Bishop of Breslau (1860) which reads:

Letter of Pius IX

"The doctrine which places one principle of life in man, namely, a rational soul from which the body receives motion and all life and sense, is the most common doctrine in the Church of God and seems to the greater number of the most approved doctors to be so closely connected with the teaching of the Church, that it is the only true and legitimate interpretation of this matter and hence cannot be denied without an error in one's faith."

Scripture

The Holy Scripture is filled with reference to man as made up of soul and body. We remember the account of man's creation in which his body was formed of the slime and then into it was breathed the breath of life. There is an exquisite passage in the Prophet Ezechiel where he is given a vision of the resurrection of the dead. He sees the lifeless bones

joined to one another and the skin and the flesh comes back on them. And then at the end he says, "and the spirit came into them and they lived" (Ezech. XXXVII, 3).

Christ Our Lord said in the Gospel, "Fear not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul" (Matt. X, 28). But perhaps the most powerful passage of all is found in those well known words of Our Lord, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" (Mark VIII, 36). This is not the language of philosophy or theology but it plainly tells us that there is something in man which can incur guilt that all the pleasures and possessions of the world cannot compensate for. That which is capable of guilt can be nothing else than his rational soul.

The same doctrine is found in the Fathers.

Fathers

St. Justin says: "Is man anything else, forsooth, than a rational animal made up of soul and body? Is the soul by itself a man? By no means; but it is the soul of a man. Shall the body be called man? Not at all; but it shall be called the body of a man. Hence, if neither of these two by itself is man but if that which is constituted of the union of the two merits the name of man, since God has called man to life and resurrection, He has not called a part of him but all of him, that is, both soul and body" (De resurrect., 8). There is some doubt about the above quotation belonging to St. Justin. It belongs at least to his time.

St. Irenaeus: "It (i.e., the body) is inspired and vivified and increased and organized by that other (i.e., the soul) (Adv. Haer. L. 2, c. 33).

St. Cyril of Alexandria: "What else is the nature of humanity except flesh animated by an intelligent soul?" (Epist. ad Succen., 46).

Proof from reason

The proof of all this from our reason is found in our consciousness which cannot lie. We are conscious that we think and that we will in accordance with the objects of thought.

Now there must be a principle within us for such actions and this principle we call the rational soul.

Consciousness

We are also conscious that it is one continuous person who does *my* thinking and willing. Those that deny such a truth will find if they will examine honestly that they assert what they deny *by the very denial.*

Personality

Furthermore we are conscious that all the actions which make up our complex life are referred to the same principle, the same owner, the same "I." It is I whose digestion performs its functions when I have eaten a meal, it is I who feel a pain. Therefore the rational soul, which is the principle for all these different actions, is one.

We come now to the discussion of the attributes of the soul.

Spirituality of the soul

The first attribute is the spirituality of the soul. This attribute requires some discussion. By spirituality we mean something that is in a higher and an altogether different order from things of matter. Material things are the things which we see about us. They have mass and weight and extension. A spiritual thing has none of these and so by its very nature it is invisible to the eye. No man could see a spirit, even if his eyes were given special power by God. We can only know at first hand anything about a spirit from the effects which it produces. It must be carefully noted that, although mass, and weight and extension manifest the nature of material things, still a thing might be without mass, extension or weight and yet not be a spirit. A spirit is a thing which cannot have the above qualities; but it is also something which belongs to a higher order of beings than matter and is capable of acts of which matter is utterly incapable.

Simplicity of a spirit

One of the outstanding qualities of a spirit is its *simplicity,* this means that it has no parts. It is hard to understand this quality since everything which our senses perceive has parts. We can only say that while a spirit is spread over a certain space by its *power,* as the soul is spread throughout

all the parts of the body, still in itself it is not spread out but is all in every part of the body at once.

The spirituality of the soul is implicitly defined in the Fourth Lateran Council (A.D. 1215), in which a profession of faith is decreed in God "the creator of all things visible and invisible, of spiritual and corporal (i.e., material) things: Who by His omnipotent power from the beginning of time created at once out of nothing the twofold creature spiritual and corporal, the angelic, namely, and the earthly: and then He made the human, a mixture, as it were, of spirit and of body" (D. 428). **Fourth Lateran**

This same definition is repeated word for word in the Vatican Council. **Vatican**

The spirituality of the soul is taught by the Scripture in all those places in which it draws a contrast between body and soul. Our Lord, as we quoted before, spoke of killing the body but not the soul. And in the Book of Ecclesiastes we read of the time when "the dust (i.e., the body) shall return into its earth from whence it was and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Eccles. XII, 7). **Scripture**

The spirituality of the soul is the very basis of the writings of the Fathers and, in fact, of all theological writers. St. John Damascene says, for instance, "The soul is a simple living immaterial substance, by its very nature beyond the perception of the eyes of the body, immortal and endowed with reason and intelligence" (De Fide Orthod., L. 2, c. 12). And St. Hilary, "The soul hath in it nothing material." **Spiritual soul implicitly or explicitly taught by all Christian teachers**

The proof from reason of the spirituality of the soul follows from the very nature of thought which those who question the truth of our doctrine must turn away from the consideration of. Matter can feel and matter can assimilate other things to itself (i.e., in digestion) but matter cannot think. But the soul, by definition, is the principle of thought.

The next attribute of the soul is its immortality. It must be carefully noted that it is one thing to prove from the teaching of the Church and from Scripture that the **Soul is immortal**

By promise and by nature

human soul will, as a matter of fact, live forever, and quite another thing to prove that the soul is by its nature immortal. The first of these is proved easily. It is the very basis of the Church's teaching and of the teaching of the Scriptures. Part of the very purpose of the Church is to procure the eternal salvation of men. This has no meaning if we are not to live forever. The ancient Creed which we use is concluded with words, "the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen." Then we have those explicit words of Our Lord, "And these (i.e., the wicked) shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting" (Matt. XXV, 46).

The promise is most explicit

But when it comes to prove from the teaching of revelation that the soul is immortal by nature, that it is something which is so made as to *demand* life without end, the task is not an easy one. The first reason for this difficulty is that this is a question in philosophy and it is not the purpose of revelation to teach philosophy. The second reason is that it makes very little difference for all practical purposes whether the soul is immortal by nature or whether it is immortal by the special gift of God which is added to its nature. The main thing to know is that we shall live forever, body and soul. And this we know from God's word.

Nature not so plainly revealed

We can, however, deduce the natural immortality of the soul from the Church's teaching when the Church is condemning a philosophy which teaches that the soul is not immortal. For in this case the philosophy advances reasons against the immortality which are condemned together with the assertion itself.

Can be deduced

The Fourth Lateran Council condemns the opinion that "the soul is mortal"; and in the same place condemns those men who, "rashly philosophizing assert that this is true, at least according to philosophy." But what is true "according to philosophy" is true from human reasoning on the nature of things. Therefore, it is not true that the soul is *by its nature* mortal.

The argument from Scripture goes in the following way. The Scripture repeatedly teaches that the soul is immortal. Now this is either true from the nature of the soul or is accomplished by some supernatural gift which God has given to the soul. But there should be some mention somewhere in revelation of such a gift. There is none. On the contrary the soul is, as we have seen, often contrasted with the body which is mortal and the immortality which was promised to Adam was clearly the immortality of the body which is *by nature* mortal.

Proved by exclusion

Fathers

As to the Fathers, they frequently argue the soul's immortality from its very nature.

St. Irenaeus: "The flesh dies, not the soul. For a spirit as something simple cannot be dissolved." (Contra Haeret., L. 5, c. 7, n. 1.)

St. Gregory of Nyssa: "How can that be dissolved which is not made up of parts?" (Orat. Catech., c. 8).

The proof from reason goes step by step.

Proof from reason

It is certain, in the first place, that the soul is indestructible; because a thing is ordinarily destroyed by taking it apart and the soul, since it is a spiritual thing, cannot have any parts. The only way a spiritual thing can be destroyed is by annihilation or reducing it to absolute nothingness. This does not lie within the power of any created or creatable force. It is within the power of God alone and is the reverse of the act of creation. That is, it could only be accomplished by God's withdrawing His conserving act by which, as we saw, all the things which He created are kept in existence.

Soul is by nature indestructible

But it should be noted that matter enjoys the same indestructibility as the soul. For if we consider matter irrespective of what form it has, it makes no difference how much we take it apart there is always the same matter in all the parts. Have we any reason, then, for saying that matter must surely last forever or that God will never annihilate it? No, we have not. It is perfectly possible that the time will

Matter indestructible but not immortal

come when matter will be of no further use. Its work will be done and God may annihilate it.

Can we not say the same thing of the soul? May not the time come when the soul will be of no further use and so God will annihilate it? Can we offer any reason (not revelation) against this?

Yes we can. The soul from its natural powers cannot come to the end of its usefulness in time. It has intelligence for finding more and more of absolute truth. This tends to go on forever. It has will for tending towards the possession of more and more of absolute good. This tends to go on forever. Neither of these powers can have any natural end. There is a natural reason why they should go on forever.

Soul demands immortality

This is confirmed by the general belief of mankind from the earliest times in the immortality of the soul. This cannot be accounted for by the remnants of some ancient revelation because heathen tribes and nations do not refer the belief to a primitive revelation. Hence, if revelation is really the origin of it, the persistence of the belief can only be accounted for because it recommends itself to man's natural reason.

Universal belief of mankind

Origin of the soul

We come now to consider the origin of the human soul. We saw in a former chapter that the origin of the soul of the first man was the distinct creative act of God. The question now is to establish how the souls of all the rest of mankind come into existence.

There were those who held that the soul of man like his body was derived from his parents by generation, that just as a part of the parent matter is separated to form a new body, so a part of the parent soul is separated to form a new soul. It is evident that such a teaching is contrary to the nature of the soul which we have established both by revelation and by reason. For since the soul is spiritual and simple and so without parts, it cannot possibly lose a part. And this doctrine (which is called Traducianism) is also condemned by the Church.

Traducianists

Condemned by the Church

Pope St. Anastasius (496) condemns the error of those who say that "just as the parents produce new bodies for the human kind from their own material bodies, so also they even supply the spirit of the living soul."

Benedict XII (1334) condemned the like error "that the human soul of a son is generated from the soul of his father as the body is generated from a body."

Leo XIII (1903) declares it to be repugnant that "the human soul should be multiplied by generation."

Each separate soul is created by God

As to the origin of the soul we have an ancient symbol, or profession of faith, dating about the middle of the fifth century which ends, "And we declare that the soul is a creature created by the divine will."

Then in the same declaration of Pope Anastasius which we quoted above the doctrine goes on, "How, therefore, can they believe, moved by a carnal mind and contrary to God's teaching, that the soul which is made to the image of God is propagated and communicated by human generation, when (here follows the true doctrine) the action which accomplished this in the beginning (i.e., the creation of the soul) does not cease from His hands as He Himself said, 'My Father worketh until now; and I work'" (John V, 17).

Some of the Fathers tainted with error

The teaching of the Fathers on this point is not absolutely universal and some of their writings seem to be tainted with Traducianism. This is owing to the fact that this erroneous system supplied a way of explaining the passing down the generations of the sin of Adam. But there are still by far the majority of the Fathers who support our doctrine; as, The Apostolic Constitutions (a work of unknown authorship which was of high authority in the fourth and fifth centuries): "And creating the soul out of nothing He infuses it into man" (L. 5, c. 7).

St. Ambrose: "By no man are the souls (of men) generated" (De Noe et Arca, L. 1, c. 4).

St. Hilary: "Every soul is the work of God, but the gen-

eration of a body is always from a body'' (De Trin., L. 10, n. 20).

The proof from reason is what is called a proof by exclusion, that is, we show that creation by God is the only possible way in which the soul of each man could come into existence.

Proof from reason

For the souls of the parents could not contribute a part of themselves as being themselves spiritual substances, nor is there any force in matter which even the hand of God could put there equal to producing a human soul. An effect cannot be greater than its cause. Therefore the only way left for the soul to come into existence is by the special act of God's creation.

The last question deals with the time of the soul's creation.

Time of the soul's creation

Origen, the eminent writer of the second and third centuries, held that human souls were created long before they were infused into bodies and existed by themselves in a separated state. This doctrine is condemned in the second Council of Constantinople, ''If anyone says or believes that the souls of men preëxisted and were sent into bodies for the sake of punishment, let him be anathema.''

Preëxistence condemned

It is the common teaching of theologians that the soul is created immediately before its infusion into the body.

This last cannot be conclusively proved by reason, since there is no inherent impossibility in God's creating the soul at any time He pleases and keeping it in a separate existence such as it will be in when it leaves the body after death. There is, however, the strongest reasonable probability against this; first, because the soul is naturally made for a double existence and, secondly, because we have no memory of any life before we were born.

Preëxistence not against reason but unlikely

As to the time of the soul's infusion by God into the body, there is no revelation nor teaching of the Church and there is an important difference of opinion between the theologians of former and of modern times. The ancient school, headed by Saint Thomas, held that the soul was not infused by God until the organism of the embryo was sufficiently developed

Time of the soul's infusion

to receive it. The majority of the moderns hold that from the first moment of conception the existence of the new individual man begins and, hence, the human soul is present from the very beginning. This seems the more reasonable position, since there seems to be from the first moment of the existence of the embryo an internal directing principle which is responsible for the development into a complete human body at the end.

Ancient and modern schools

The doctrine of reincarnation which has become something of a vogue in modern times, teaches that after this life our souls pass into other bodies and take up new earthly careers. It is a fanciful and foolish teaching and is, of course, against the revealed truth that the time of trial ends with this life and this alone.

Reincarnation

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why is the existence of man's soul an important doctrine?
2. Why is the union of the soul with the body an important doctrine?
3. Prove from Scripture that man has a rational soul.
4. What do we prove from our consciousness?
5. What do you mean by the simplicity of the soul?
6. What is the difference between immortality by nature and by divine gift?
7. Why is the indestructibility of matter different from the immortality of the soul?
8. Why does the soul demand immortality?
9. Prove that the soul must be created.
10. What is the teaching of the two schools as to the time of the soul's infusion into the body?

CHAPTER XIX

THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF ANGELS

Angels dealt with by revelation alone

The existence of angels is something which is outside the ordinary experience of men and so must be dealt with by revelation alone. We say the *ordinary* experience because there have been authentic, though rare, instances of dealings with angels by individual men and women.

The title "angel"

The word "angel" comes from a Greek word meaning messenger and is only given on account of the most prominent function which these beings have exercised in connection with the history of mankind. It is a function which links them with both God and man. With regard to their relation to God alone they have in revelation other names which we shall examine later.

What are the angels?

The first thing which revelation clearly teaches about the angels is that God has created an order of intelligent beings of a different nature from men. And the beings of this order are called angels.

In the Fourth Lateran Council we have the following definition:

IV Lateran

"(God) created by His omnipotent power in the beginning of time in like manner a twofold (order of) creature, the spiritual and the corporeal, the angelic, namely, and the earthly, and then the human (creature) made of a mixture, as it were, of body and spirit." And this same doctrine is many times repeated in other declarations of the Church. There is the same contrast between angels and men as between men and brutes, these last being corporeal but not rational, while the angels are rational but not corporeal.

All through the Scriptures the angels are spoken of as beings of a different order from men, though, like men, gifted

with intelligence. This difference from men is made evident by the fear of men, even good men, for an angel. In the Book of Tobias, which is one of the most beautiful stories ever put on paper, when the angel Raphael declares his identity, the holy old man Tobias and his family "being seized with fear fell upon the ground on their face" (Tob. XII, 16). Then there was the angel of the Lord who spoke to the shepherds on the first Christmas eve "and they feared with a great fear" (Luke II, 9).

Fear in the presence of angels

Angels are gifted with powers that are different from those of men, as the angel who descended with the youth into the fiery furnace. "And he drove the flame of the fire out of the furnace, and he made the midst of the furnace like the blowing of a wind bringing dew." (Daniel III, 49, 50.) There was the angel also who carried Habacuc from Judea to Babylon and then back again in a very few moments (Dan. XIV, 35, 38).

Preternatural powers of angels

A very striking passage is that in the Gospel which tells how Our Lord appeared to His Apostles after the Resurrection, then how they were frightened and "supposed they saw a spirit." (This word is the equivalent all through the Scripture for an angel.) Then Our Lord spoke to them with wonderful tenderness, "See my hands and feet, that it is I myself; handle, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me to have" (Luke XXIV, 37, 39).

"A spirit hath not flesh and bones"

It is unnecessary to quote the Fathers; for all through their writings they refer to the angels, and they severely condemn those who say that the angels are nothing more than the attributes of God personified or are the souls of men after death.

Angels are not personified attributes

About the nature of the angels we cannot claim very much certain knowledge either from revelation or from theology, though the subject is a most fascinating study. There is no doubt that they are of a superior nature to men. The Psalmist says of man, "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels" (Ps. VIII, 6). And St. Peter's Epistle:

Nature of angels

" . . . angels who are greater (i.e., than man) in strength and power" (II Pet. II, 11).

And the Fathers and the constant teaching of the Church testify to the same truth. Moreover, the angels' superiority consists in the fact that by nature they are pure spirits without a body. Some of the more ancient Fathers seem to think that the angels had bodies of some subtle substance superior to the human body. It is extremely doubtful whether the Fathers meant body in the sense in which we use it now and, at any rate, such an opinion is today universally rejected by the Church.

Have the angels bodies?

The angels are also held to be superior to us in the matter of knowledge, not only as to the things which they know but also in their natural way of thinking or of acquiring knowledge.

But when it comes to discussing the exact nature of these wonderful elusive beings, we are facing no more than devout theory, though an extraordinary amount of talent and sublime conjecture has been expended on the same. St. Thomas, who is one of the highest authorities in the matter, thinks that the angels are supplied with subject-matter for their thoughts by the direct infusion of knowledge from God. Hence they are not obliged, as we are, to depend on things that they perceive.

The exact nature of the angels is object of theory

Then the Angelic Doctor (as St. Thomas was called) propounds a noble theory as to how the angels can talk to each other, and his theory is disputed by others who advance theories of their own. The fact of their talking is clear from revelation and it would be a grievous imperfection not to be able to communicate one's ideas. But to offer an opinion on these subtleties is outside of our purpose here.

Speech of the angels

The difficulty may be advanced—How, if the angels have no bodies, can it be true that they have appeared to men and spoken to them? There is no more difficulty in explaining this than there is in explaining how God could appear to men and speak to them, as He, Who is a pure spirit,

Appearances of the angels

is said so often to have done. Either the angel appeared only to the mind of the person and spoke, likewise, to his mind only, or else the angel assumed for the time the appearance of a human being.

Time of the angels' creation

The time of the creation of the angels is usually held to have been after or together with the creation of the material world and before the creation of man. The devil who tempted Eve was a fallen angel.

Their presence in space

The presence of angels in space is something else which gives matter for discussion. Certainly they are not in space as a body is present there and just as certainly they are not present in space as God is present, as we saw when treating of His immensity, that is, everywhere at once. The first would be against the spiritual nature of the angel, the second against the finiteness of the angel as a creature. The only solution seems to be that the angel is present in space as the human soul is present in the body, all at once in every part of the space in which it is but always within a limited space. Then when the question comes as to how much space an angel occupies at the same time and how it can move about from place to place, we must leave the discussion to the great Doctors who, it must be said, have come to no agreement in the matter.

Never lose the vision of God

It seems most clear, however, that when angels are engaged on God's business on this earth or are watching over the lives of human beings they do not lose the vision of God which makes the happiness of heaven, as we shall see. Christ confirmed this when He said, speaking of little children, "Their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matt. XVIII, 10).

Orders of angels

We have mention in different parts of the Scripture of what seem to be different orders of angels and nine distinct names are given to them: Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Virtues, Powers, Dominations, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. The universal teaching is that these orders are not equal to one another but subordinate one to the other, and the

general opinion is that the first two belong to the lowest order. As to how the remaining orders rank there is too much dispute to come to any sure conclusion. There is a beautiful theory that each order fills with the knowledge of the divine mysteries which are above all created intelligence, the order which is immediately below it; and the highest order is illuminated by God Himself. This, of course, does not prevent all the angels from enjoying the direct vision of God.

Guardians of mankind

The most consoling part of the doctrine of the angels is that they are appointed the guardians of individual men and women. This is by no means mere theological theory but is the clear message of revelation both from the Scriptures and from the constant teaching of the Church without any explicit definition.

Psalmist

We have the memorable words of the Psalmist, which are so striking that the devil, who knows Scripture well, quoted them when he tempted Christ to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. "He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up lest thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Ps. XCI, 11, 12). And there are the words of Our Lord about the "little ones" which we quoted above.

The Fathers supply ample testimony to this universal belief of the Church.

Fathers

St. Jerome: "So great is the dignity of souls that each soul has from the day of its birth an appointed angel for its guardianship" (In Matth. XVIII, 10).

Theodoret: " . . . since Christ the Lord said that all men are, each one, under the care of a particular angel" (In Gen. I, ad. interrog. 3).

Honorius of Autun (ab. 1150): "Each soul when it is sent into the body is committed to the care of an angel" (Sent., L. 1, c. 10).

There is an extension of this doctrine very commonly held by the Fathers to the effect that particular angels are also

appointed to the guardianship of particular countries. They find scriptural authority for this especially in a passage of the Book of Daniel in which there seems to be an account of the angel of one country conferring with the angel of another (Dan. X, 12-20). The great St. Basil says, "The fact that there is present an angel to each one of the faithful as a counsellor and guide directing his life no one can contradict who remembers the Lord's words. . . . But the fact that, beyond this, there are particular angels set in charge of entire nations Moses teaches us by his canticle when he says, 'When the Most High divided the nations, when he dispersed the children of Adam, he fixed the boundaries of the nations according to the number of his angels' " (Adv. Eunom., L. 3, c. 3). Theodoret adds that while the care of each one of us is given to an angel, "On archangels is the duty laid that they be the guardians of nations. . . ." (In Dan. X, 23).

Guardians of countries

We cannot help remarking in the light of this truth that the particular angel or archangel who is the guardian of our own beloved land has been wonderfully successful in his work, since our land has been so visibly protected from the time when its flag was first raised.

America's angel

Some of the most eminent of the Fathers go on to say that it is most probable that angels are also active in the guardianship of irrational beings such as animals and plants and even mountains and rivers. This can only mean that these angels direct these things so that they help man's salvation or that they work no injury to it. For all their work has no other purpose than that.

Guardians of things

There is a last dispute in which the theologians of the Church engage concerning the angels. It is whether they can affect material forces and material things by their natural power or not. That they have wrought material effects is most clear from the records of revelation. An angel slew thousands of the enemies of God's people and struck down the people of Israel themselves when they were unfaithful.

How do they affect material things?

An angel also rolled back the stone of Our Lord's tomb. Then, as we have seen, angels have frequently spoken to men and dealt with them, many at a time, when there could be no question of some particular man's vision. This question must remain unsolved like so many others till the day when our daily lot is to be the companions of the angels.

They can intercede for us

There is one more truth about the angels which is not a matter of pious opinion or dispute but is just as surely revealed as the existence of those bright spirits. This is the truth that the angels can intercede for us with their prayers. This truth is confirmed by the constant practice of the Church from the earliest times of invoking the angels (the law of praying is the law of believing) and is included in the fundamental dogma of the Communion of Saints.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. How much is sure about the existence and the nature of the angels?
2. Prove from Scripture that the angels are of a nature different from man's and strange to him.
3. Prove that the angels are superior to men.
4. How have the angels been seen by men?
5. How are the angels present in space?
6. Prove that the angels are the guardians of men.
7. Prove that the angels were created before men.
8. What is known of the different orders of the angels?
9. Prove that angels can affect material things.
10. Prove that the angels can intercede for us.

CHAPTER XX

THE FALL OF THE BAD ANGELS

We come now to a part of the history of the angels which is very striking both in its likeness and in its difference in comparison with the history of mankind. It is that part of their history which deals with the fall into grievous sin of a large number of the angels and their eternal condemnation. It is a truth which is an explicit part of revelation and so is above all opinion and is plainly supported both by the Scripture and the Fathers.

Fall of the angels revealed

The Fourth Lateran Council teaches, "The devil, indeed, and the rest of the demons were created good in their nature by God but by their own act they became bad." This same teaching is found in the Council of Braga in Spain (now Portugal) nearly seven hundred years earlier, in the following condemnation:

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"If anyone says that the devil was not first made by God a good angel and that his nature was not the work of God, but says that he came forth from darkness and has no author of his being, as Manichæus and Priscillianus said, let him be anathema."

There is the same doctrine in the Scripture; St. Peter says in his Epistle, " . . . God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment" (II Pet. II, 4). Then there is the terrible sentence spoken by Our Lord, "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. XXV, 41). And His other words, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven" (Luke X, 18).

St. Peter's Epistle

The Fathers with one voice teach the sin of the angels and

Fathers

its grievousness. Their teaching bears particularly on the deeper malice of the angels' sin on account of their superior nature.

St. Augustine: "For in the measure in which a rational nature is superior, in that same measure is its downfall deeper; and as its sin is more incredible so is it more accursed. Hence the angel fell beyond repair, since to whom more is given from him more is exacted" (Opus Imperf. Contr. Jul., L. 6, c. 22).

St. Gregory the Great: "An angel is spirit alone, but man is both spirit and flesh. The creator therefore in His pity to redeem should bring back to Himself that creature who in the perpetration of his sin displayed a certain infirmity; and all the further away should He drive the rebellious angel since (this creature) carried no infirmity of flesh, falling as he did from perfect strength" (Moral., L. 4, c. 3).

Angels more guilty than man

St. John Damascene: "One who sins at the urging of another is more worthy of pardon and excuse than one who sins of his own independent will. For the one who sins of his own independent will is inexcusable. The devil, therefore, who sinned by his own independent will knows not how to repent; but for man there is left the opportunity of repentance for he sinned, not by his independent will, but by the urging of the devil" (Dial. Contr. Manich., n. 33).

There is one conclusion which we can draw from the sin of the angels. It is clearly contained in this truth without any definition of the Church or any teaching of the Scripture or the Fathers on this particular matter. From the fundamental teaching of revelation we know that no one can be created in a state of *personal* sin. And so it follows that the bad angels must have been created in a state of sinlessness.

Angels must have been sinless in the beginning

But there are three most interesting questions to be solved in connection with this. First, were the angels in the presence of God when they sinned? Second, were they in a state

Three questions

of sanctifying grace? Third, were the good angels subjected to the same temptation to sin as the bad angels?

The answer to the first question would seem at first to be, "Yes." For we have the words of Our Lord above quoted about Satan falling from heaven, and in other places in Scripture we read of the "strife in heaven" after which the bad angels were seen there no more. But the universal teaching of theologians is against this. They teach after St. Thomas that in God's presence in the strict sense no such thing as sin is possible. Therefore the bad angels must have been placed, like man, in a state of trial. And they must have failed as man failed. See here the likeness to the history of man and the terrible unlikeness. Man was punished, but only in the things of time. That is to say, time was blackened and made full of sorrow by the first sin of man but time only. By the sin of the angels their whole eternity was ruined.

Were the angels in God's presence?

It is true that some few of the theological writers think that the angels were given the opportunity of repentance so that, in this case, they would have a kind of double guilt, one from their sin and the other from the refusal to repent. But this opinion is against the majority of the Fathers and has little likelihood. The common teaching is that they sinned *once and for all.* How this can be perfectly reconciled with God's perfect justice we shall see in the chapter on hell.

Had they time for repentance?

The next question is whether the angels were created in a state of sanctifying grace. Here again there is division of opinion. Some hold that they were created without this grace which they had to dispose themselves for by their fidelity. In this case, the bad angels would never have known sanctifying grace since they had but one trial and failed in it. Note that there was no such thing among the angels as original sin.

Were they created in sanctifying grace?

But by far the more common opinion holds that all the angels were created in a state of sanctifying grace which the bad angels by their fall lost never to recover. The fact that

Common opinion

the good angels at the present time see the face of God makes it sure that *they* are in a state of sanctifying grace (or at least the equivalent of it). There can be no division of opinion on this point.

Were all tried?

The third question is whether the good and the bad angels together were created in the same state and subjected to the same trial in which some were faithful and others unfaithful. Once more there is some difference of opinion. Some few in ancient times held that some of the angels were created in a state of term as well as in a state of glory without any time of trial at all.

God's usual method

Though such an opinion is not heresy, since there is no clear teaching of revelation in the matter, still it is an opinion which has no supporters today. Moreover, it would be contrary to the method which God usually follows, to create free beings in a state of term in which they could merit nothing, nor find their way to Him through battle. The majority of the Fathers and all theologians since St. Thomas teach that both the good and the bad angels, having been created in sanctifying grace, both were subjected to the same trial and reached together the state of term, which for the good angels was the vision of God and for the bad was the punishment of hell together with separation from God forever.

Fathers

St. Gregory Nazianzen says, "Whatever one of the angels dared to raise rebellion and to exalt himself above his proper dignity, his arrogance paid the due penalty . . . by his own act was he changed into darkness (i.e., into a spirit of darkness). But the rest (of the angels) persevere in their worthiness of which the first essential is that they are untouched by sin and secession; for they are those who have received from the holy and glorious Trinity the gift of union, as they received the gift of glory from that same (Holy Trinity)" (Orat. 6, de Pace, n. 13). In the same way St. Augustine says that just as the bad angels fell through their own free will and lost their beatitude, "So the good angels

by the same free will remained firm and merited a due reward of this firm stand, which reward was such a fullness of glory as to make them sure that they will remain in it forever" (De Corr. et Grat., c. 11).

So, finally, teaches St. Gregory the Great: "The angelic Virtues (meaning the good angels) who remained firm in the divine love received as a reward . . . they should be fixed in the vision of their creator without any end to their joy" (Moral., L. 27, c. 39). The same teaching is found in many of the other great Fathers.

How long were they in a state of trial?

It is quite natural to ask how long a time elapsed after the angels' creation until they were subjected to the trial which admitted some to the vision of God and consigned others to the separation of hell. No one pretends to answer this question with any certainty. It is like asking how long Adam lived in the garden before the fall. It is commonly thought, however, that the time was a short one. We must remember that time for angels was not measured as it is for us by the earth and the sun but only by the angels' own thoughts following one after the other.

Where were they tried?

In like manner the place where the angels lived before their trial depends on the solution of the way in which an angel occupies space. We must wait for the solution of this.

Nature of the angels' sin

The next question is to decide the particular nature of the sin of the angels. This question is fascinating for its mystery. If it is hard to understand how Adam could have sinned with all his joys and superior gifts, how much harder is it to understand the sin of beings with higher natures than Adam—clear minds and strong wills and no bodies to obscure the judgment by the bodily senses. Yet it is sure that they did deliberately sin.

Some form of pride

The almost unanimous opinion of both Fathers and theologians is that the sin of the angels was one of pride. This they gather from the indication of a number of texts in the Scripture, as when Tobias says to his son, "Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind or in thy words: for from it all

perdition took its beginning" (Tob. IV, 14). This passage would refer to the sin of the angels, since they certainly sinned *before* man. And St. Paul in his letter to Timothy calls pride "the judgment of the devil," that is, the sin which brought judgment on the devil.

Isaias

The classical passage which the Fathers use is one from the Book of Isaias. It is primarily directed against the king of Babylon who was the enemy of God's people and it is applied at the same time to the devil, who is the arch enemy of God. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! . . . And thou saidst in thy heart . . . I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (Is. XIV 12-14).

What sin of pride?

But when we have settled that the angels' sin was one of pride there is still more to be asked. Pride has so many different forms. Pride is to put myself in some way before God. The angels could not have thought themselves the equal of God. They had too much understanding for that. They must have desired something forbidden or refused something commanded. What was it?

The Incarnation revealed to them?

One very beautiful theory advanced by many theologians is that the mystery of the Incarnation was revealed to the angels and they were bidden to adore the Person of God the Son clothed in human nature which is a lower nature than their own. This some of them refused out of pride to do. Others hold that when the plan of the Incarnation was revealed to them some of them desired that God should unite Himself to the angelic nature rather than to the human. Others hold that they desired the vision of God without meriting it according to God's plan.

No certainty in this matter

All these theories are noble conjectures but cannot be said to have any final surety. The best description of the angels' sin is the general one from Isaias. They wished to be like to God, either by ambitioning some rights which are God's alone or by usurping His rule or seeking to change

His plan. We get a wonderful echo of this in the words of the serpent to Eve, "Ye shall be as gods."

Job calls the devil the "king over all the children of pride" (Job XLI, 25). Some infer from this that Lucifer must have somehow persuaded the lesser angels to follow him in his sin.

One angel seems to have seduced others

The last thing to discuss is the relation of the bad angels to mankind.

First, with regard to the soul of man, we have clear revelation to the effect that the bad angels are permitted to attack or tempt men's souls in order to accomplish their spiritual destruction.

Bad angels tempt men

The devil, as we saw, tempted our first parents in the garden. He tempted Christ Himself, though there he, unquestionably, did not know that He was God but took Him for some holy man with a specially high mission from God. In the Parable of the Sower, Our Lord speaks of the devil who "cometh and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved" (Luke VIII, 12). And St. Paul says in a famous passage, "Put you on the armor of God that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places" (Ephes. VI, 11, 12).

Scripture

From this it does not follow that every inclination to evil comes from the devil. We have our own evil nature to tempt us and evil men in the world about us. It is not at all sure that Adam would not have fallen if there had been no fallen angel there to tempt. Nor is it sure that we should not sin if there were no bad angels whatever in existence. But it is sure that the devil knows the weakness of our nature and uses it against us. It is sure that the bad angels are eternally fixed in their opposition to God and all His plans. This is the natural consequence of their deliberate turning away from God. They remain turned away from Him as

The devil is not the origin of all temptations

Bad angels permanently opposed to God

we saw was the case with a man guilty of habitual sin. There is this difference, though; a man in the state of habitual sin may repent or even without repenting he may do some good while he is in that state. All the acts of his nature are certainly not directed against God. It is the contrary with the bad angels. They can neither will any good nor do any good. Every act of their nature is directed against God.

Good works draw their attack

It is impossible to say how far the devil is implicated in our particular temptations and particular sins. But if we are engaged in some work which will bring great glory to God and win many souls to him, it is much more likely that we shall be the object of the devil's particular attacks.

Why is this permitted?

Some will be moved to ask here why God allows the devils to tempt us. Is it not hard enough to save our souls without this extra pressure being put upon us which we have in no way merited?

This question is only another form of the problem of the presence of evil in the world. We cannot say why the devil is allowed to tempt us any more than we can say why evil men are allowed to tempt us. This is God's plan and we know that it is filled with the manifestations of His love. If we could see with our eyes the hatred of the devil for us, we should, beyond a doubt, be terrified. But if we could see with the same eyes the protecting grace of God which is ever active for us, and the diligence of our Guardian Angel, we should appreciate the part which God's love plays in the battle of life. These things are left for the eye of faith.

Devil allowed to afflict man's body

We have also positive revelation to the effect that the devil is sometimes allowed to attack man's body, to cause him pain and sickness. There is a classical example of this in the book of Job. And the Psalmist speaks of God's affliction of the Egyptians, the "trouble which He sent by evil angels" (Psalm LXXVII, 49). This is sometimes by way of punishment, sometimes by way of trial, but in every case man is able to turn the attacks of the devil to the benefit of his

own soul. It is impossible in ordinary cases to distinguish the agency of the evil one, for even when afflictions happen from natural causes this is no assurance that the devil had no hand in it, since he, by God's permission, can turn the powers of nature against us.

Finally, we have from the Scripture the account of physical possession by the devil. There is no doubt whatever of this. The words of revelation are too plain. The devils are related in one case to have left the body of the possessed and to have gone into the bodies of swine. (Luke VIII, 20-34). This could not refer to the moral presence of the devil in the man, i.e., attacking his soul in a purely spiritual way. But of these possessions while we can say nothing accurately, since we know so little of the nature of an angel, we can be absolutely sure that nothing can ever give the devil or anyone else control of the free will of man.

Possession by the devil

The account of the possession by the devil in the Gospel of St. Luke mentioned here gives us an excellent example of the way that the nature of this angel is turned away from God. For, when Christ draws near, the devil screams out by the lips of the man whom he is possessing, "I beseech thee, do not torment me." There could be no question of God's inflicting more torment on the devil. The amount of his torment is fixed. But his whole nature, being turned from God, shrinks from God's presence. Christ did not affect men that way, even the worst men.

The devil necessarily shrinks from Christ

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Prove from the Councils and the Scripture that some of the angels fell into grievous sin.
2. Why were the angels more guilty than man?
3. Prove that the angels could not have been in possession of the Vision of God when they sinned.
4. Prove that some of the angels are now endowed with sanctifying grace or its equivalent.
5. Prove from the Scripture that the angels sinned by pride.
6. How was the Incarnation said to have been the occasion of the sin of the angels?

7. Prove that the angels tempt men.
8. Is it possible to determine with certainty when an affliction of mind or body comes from the devil?
9. How do we prove that possession by the devil was not a mere spiritual attack?
10. Why do the bad angels shrink from Christ?

CHAPTER XXI

UNLAWFUL AND DANGEROUS ARTS AND PRACTICES

There are a great many things which we are in ignorance of concerning the natural forces in our world. It is true that much has been discovered but much remains undiscovered or only half discovered. It is perfectly lawful for us to seek to learn by reading and experiments what are called the secrets of nature. The only condition is that we do not employ any means which are contrary to morality or contrary to the worship of God.

Our ignorance of nature

It is true that in the old days when people knew so much less of the natural forces in the world, they were over-inclined to attribute happenings which exceeded their understanding to more than natural causes. In these days inclination is towards the other extreme. Excess is always wrong but it is a safer extreme to attribute too much to supernatural causes than to deny that anything can happen except by perfectly natural causes.

Superstition of earlier times

Magic is usually named among the unlawful arts. The word is a very old one and is derived from the Magi or Eastern priests who were supposed to be skilled in performing marvels. Writers distinguish in a general way between what is called "White Magic" and "Black Magic." The first of these is the performing of things in a manner wonderful to the beholders on account of their ignorance of the causes, but by means which are perfectly lawful. A good example of this is, without a doubt, the tricks of professional sleight-of-hand men. They merely deceive the eye just as the ventriloquist deceives the ear. They are in many cases, too, helped by clever mechanical devices.

Magic, White and Black

Sleight of hand

Invoking the devil

Black Magic means the performance of things with the invocation and aid of the evil spirit. This is evidently unlawful. The mind or the whole being of the devil and of all the fallen angels is irrevocably set against God and against all His works, including our salvation, and therefore any deliberate dealing with them is dealing with God's enemies and our own. That such dealings have sometimes happened is clear from revelation, as in the account of the magicians who strove against Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh (Exod. VII, 11), and in the Acts of the Apostles there is mention of Simon the Magician who had bewitched the people with "his magical practices" (Acts VIII, 11). And in Leviticus the prohibition is very plain, together with the reason for it: "Go not aside after wizards, neither ask anything of soothsayers, to be defiled by them: I am the lord your God" (Levit. XIX, 31).

Scripture

But what we are more specially concerned with is not the deliberate commerce with the devil which is out of the question with persons with any pretence to religion and, as far as our knowledge goes, is not at all common in the world around us; but we wish to consider certain practices which are dangerous since they deprive us of our free will and judgment and bring on states in which we are more open to the devil's attack. These practices are also unlawful in so far as they endanger the worship of God. In this connection they are called "impious practices."

Dangerous practices

Let us consider first three things together, magnetism, mesmerism and hypnotism.

These three practices have much in them which is identical and, indeed, in their ultimate effects they have little to distinguish them. The use of them has attracted a great deal of notice in the last hundred years, but it is highly probable that they were known in earlier times, though the nature of them was not examined. The first, which is more fully named "animal magnetism" is so named because it discovers in the animal world effects similar to those caused in the

Animal magnetism, mesmerism, hypnotism

world of lifeless substances by the lode-stone or magnet. The second is called after its supposed discoverer, Franz Anton Mesmer, an Austrian physician who died in 1815. The third is named from a Greek word which means sleep.

In all three practices an influence is exercised on the mind and will of human beings through some medium which is different from the ordinary one of speech or of natural signs. In hypnotism and mesmerism there is also induced in the subject a kind of trance in which the subject comes under the control of the one who has induced the trance in him. These trances seem to be connected with some kind of fascination of the eye or the tiring of the optic nerve. This is brought about either by passes of the hand before the face or by having the subject gaze at some bright object or, finally, by the fixed look of the hypnotizer or mesmerizer himself. In some cases, especially where the subject has become habituated to the experience, a mere word of command from a competent person is enough to induce the trance.

Hypnotic trance

The phenomena, or things to be noticed, in this trance are, first, the obedience of the will and even, to some extent, of the body of the sleeping person to the hypnotizer. People suffering severe pain have been known to be relieved of it by hypnotism and to have awakened to find no recurrence of the pain. The other effect, which is, however, substantially denied by some hypnotists, is some kind of an elevation of the mind and the senses in which distant things are seen and facts, known neither to the hypnotizer nor to the hypnotized, are discovered.

These practices would be against the worship of God if there were any necessary implication in them of the devil's agency. But so far there is none whatever. Even the communication with the minds of distant persons may be set down to what is called *telepathy*. This last is a field in which very little progress has been made by scientific investigation but reliable discoveries are not at all impossible.

Obedience of the will to the hypnotizer

In early times the majority of people put such things down

No evident league with the devil

at once to diabolical art. This was wrong. But we should remember that those who practiced them were equally ignorant in *thinking* that they were exercising devil-sent powers. Hence, in many cases they were guilty of the witchcraft for which they had to suffer the punishment of the law.* The same thing would be true of persons who stumbled by accident on the discovery of some of the powers of steam or electricity or some of the laws of chemistry and imagined themselves to be favored by the devil and acted accordingly.

Lawful as surgical aids

Hypnotism and the other like practices can have a dangerous character if they are considered in connection with the subject who submits himself to them. In hands of competent and reputable practitioners they may be lawfully used in the place of anæsthetics. In like manner they are said to have been successfully employed in the cure of nervous disorders and in cases of alcoholism and the like. So far, all's well. But the over-frequent submission to the trance

Unlawful without safeguards

is known to be seriously damaging to the health as well as weakening to the will. It is also full of danger when it renders unprotected persons helpless in the hands of the unscrupulous.

Ouija board

There is a fairly well-known instrument which comes up for consideration here. It is called the Ouija board or Planchette. It is a little three-legged table on which the tips of the fingers are placed and then it spells out messages with one of the legs on a lettered board or else one of the legs is a pencil which writes on a sheet of paper placed beneath. This phenomenon involves two things, involuntary motion, or motion over which the will has no control, and subconscious thought, or thoughts and desires which we have down deep in us but do not realize that we have.

The subconscious

A great deal of important scientific investigation of these two things has been made in recent years. Therefore, in the aid of obtaining lawful knowledge this instrument or anything like it is just as lawful as hypnotism. But there

*We by no means intend to excuse here such cruelties as the Salem witch-trials. They were proved to be malicious slandering of the innocent.

are the same dangers present which are all the more to be guarded against since this instrument can easily become the toy of curious children. To yield oneself up to the flow of involuntary impulses will, if habitually indulged in, lead to the lack of bodily control and to diseases like St. Vitus Dance. Like serious effects can come from letting ourselves drift, as it were, on the stream of the subconscious. Ouija board insanity is a well-known malady. There was a serious warning against it drawn up some years ago by the State of California Lunacy Commission.

Ouija board insanity

Now when it comes to the practice which is quite common, of asking the Ouija board questions about the future there comes into the question an element which is entirely different from that of bodily or mental health. It is the element of the worship of God and the reverence due to Him. This is impiety.

Seeking to know the future

The future as far as it depends on the free will of man can be known neither to men nor to angels good or bad, but only to God alone. Therefore, to question a mechanical device about the future is to attribute God's power to someone else than God. For there could hardly be anyone so foolish as to think that God would reveal the future to us in this way. And the point to be stressed is that when people *commonly* invoke the Ouija board or similar things about the future they are not seeking revelation from God or from man and therefore, either implicitly or explicitly, they are seeking the aid of powers which are neither human nor divine. Here there is danger of very serious sin.

Man's free future acts known to God alone

There are two ways in which the future can be lawfully guessed at or known with a fair degree of certainty. First, as regards things which will depend on man's free choice we can conjecture from a man's habits and tendencies in the present what he will do in the future. If a man is very careless about his property and leaves things about loosely he is very likely to be robbed. Again, if he is a man of violent temper and is nursing a bitter grudge he is likely to

Some future things may be known from the present

commit murder. So, if I know a man's subconscious desires I can conjecture what he is likely to do. Hence, if one is only carrying on an investigation of present tendencies in oneself or others, questions as to the future can be justified. But that is evidently *not* the usual sense of such questions. People don't want to know what they have a tendency to do, or what has a tendency to happen but what *will* happen.

With regard to the future as depending on necessary causes, like the forces of physical nature, we can come to a prediction by examining the state of those same forces as they now are. We can predict the weather, though this is not yet a perfect science, from atmospheric conditions. We can predict the return of a comet by studying its path and the speed at which it is moving. But what a different thing this is from asking the Ouija board what will be the state of the weather.

The question may be asked what the bad angels or the devil have to do with this, especially since the devil cannot know the future?

The devil can forecast the future better than men

But the devil does know much better than men the future which depends on physical causes. He sees with an angelic eye deep into the structure of the universe. He also sees the tendencies in men at the present time. Lastly, and this is most important, the devil can exercise control on natural forces and he can powerfully tempt a man according to man's tendencies. Hence he can bring to pass something which he has predicted; he can tempt a man to a crime which he has predicted. God's protection, it is true, would make us safe against such things. But we forfeit God's protection when we lightly deal with His enemy.

He may bring about his predictions

There is a very interesting account of an inquiry touching this matter made of the Congregation of the Holy Office at Rome some years ago. It goes as follows:

"A man (we can call him Mr. Smith), taking care to exclude any convention with the evil spirit, is accustomed to

call upon the spirits of the dead. This is the way he usually goes about it. Without any other action he merely directs his prayer to the chief of the heavenly army with the request that he may be allowed intercourse with the spirit of some particular person. A few moments pass and then he feels his hand which he holds ready for writing begin to move itself, and so he is made aware of the presence of the spirit. All the things that he wishes to learn are made known and his hand writes down the answers to questions. These answers are in agreement with the belief and the teaching of the Church concerning the future life. For the most part the answers have to do with the state of some departed soul, the need which this soul has of prayers, and the grief which it suffers at the ingratitude of those who are related to it by ties of blood."

Question asked the Holy Office

The man who was accustomed to act in the above way wished to know from the Church whether what he was doing was permitted by the Church and, in general, what the Church had to say about the whole thing.

He received the following answer, which was personally approved by Leo XIII, from the Congregation of the Holy Office, March 30th, 1898:

"First, as the case is given, it is not allowed—

"Second, one is not free from blame who protests that he wishes to have no dealings with the demon and at the same time uses disproportionate means for gaining information."

The expression "disproportionate means" signifies *means that are entirely inadequate for the effect.* A good example of this is asking the Ouija board whether it will rain tomorrow. Someone may object in the case that is given above that the man merely prayed to the "chief of the heavenly army" that could only be to Saint Michael or one of the higher angels. What could be the harm in that? This is not true. The man did more than that. He expected his hand to become possessed with the power to write by a spirit from the other world who should thus be sent to him and answer

Disproportionate means

his questions. This is not the way we are taught to pray or the way in which answers come to our prayers. Above all, the mind of the Church is registered against it. Her judgment in this matter is the fruit of long experience.

Church cautions against superstition in regard to medals of the saints, etc.

The caution of the Church with regard to the wearing and carrying about of such things as medals and the like is to the point here. It is a caution given to preachers by the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore. Preachers are told that "they should warn again and again those of the faithful who are of less education and intelligence not to attribute too much power to these things (i.e., medals, etc.) in themselves, nor to cherish them with a certain blind and immoderate trust nor look on them with superstitious veneration as if these things (medals, etc.), could accomplish everything by themselves without the aid of any devout disposition of the mind whatever" (N. 350). If there is real danger, then, of superstition in the case of medals of Our Lord and the saints, danger of attributing to them power that they cannot have by themselves, how much more danger of superstition in the case of things which have no such sacred connection?

We come now to consider a set of practices which in modern times has grown into a definite cult or sect. We refer to Spiritism.

Spiritism.

Spiritism, as a practice, is nothing else than a method of invoking the spirits of the departed and of receiving messages from them. The idea that underlies this practice is as old as mankind. Certainly as soon as man first became subject to death he felt a desire, unless he thought that the soul ceased to live when the body died, to peer through the curtain of the grave beyond which lived somehow those whom he had known and loved.

Different from mere heresy

But what is there wrong or dangerous in Spiritism, especially since it preserves the noble doctrine of the soul's immortality? It is true that Spiritism, as far as it offers a definite set of teachings to which by no means all Spiritists adhere, is at variance with the message of Christ in the teach-

ings of His Church. Spiritism denies the divinity of Christ, the resurrection of the body, original sin, and quite a few of the other doctrines of Christian revelation. This missing of the message of Christ is common to all heresies and yet we do not say that heresy is a *dangerous practice* in the same sense that we say it of Spiritism. Only an ignorant Catholic would say that the prayers of heretics to God are wrong or do not reach Him. How does Spiritism differ from any other kind of heresy? Why can't we praise it for the truth it has and hope that it will acquire more and leave it so?

The answer lies in an examination of the methods which are used in Spiritism to produce the effects which it produces, and in an examination of those effects themselves. Then we should examine, and this is the most important thing of all, the *intention* which Spiritists have in what they do.

The medium and trance

The principal visible agency which is used by Spiritists is the "medium" and the medium's "trance." A medium is a man or woman who can project himself into the trance state. The ability to do this seems to be born in some persons to a far greater degree than others and in women more often than in men. But there seems to be no doubt that the ease of entering into a trance grows with the practice of it.

The state of trance is very similar to that which is induced by hypnotism and mesmerism. But there are some evident differences. The trances can be brought on without the aid of another person; then the trance-subject is under some mysterious and invisible influence and, finally, the medium can exercise a mysterious influence over persons and things about him or her. Take some examples of this which have been very thoroughly authenticated.

Differs from hypnotic trance

Persons in the presence of the medium hear the singing of distant voices. They see human figures in * the air; they feel

*I was once told the following experience by a retired officer of the British Army. He had been one of the well-known column sent to relieve the town of Khartum in Egypt where General Charles Gordon was besieged. The column arrived too late. Khartum had fallen and the manner of Gordon's death was never learned. My informant went to a Spiritistic seance years afterwards and was asked by the medium whom he would like to see. "Show me the man who killed Gordon," said the soldier. Gradually there formed in front of him in

Well authenticated phenomena

the grasp of invisible hands. Then, information is given about things known only to the person informed and not to the medium and there seem to be some well-established instances of the revelation of truths known only to persons who are not present. Again, lifeless things like tables and chairs are moved and lifted into the air without any visible force applied to them. The same thing has happened to human beings. This phenomenon is called "levitation."

How are these things to be explained?

The first explanation is to attribute them one and all to fraud, that is, to some clever manipulations of the deceivers aided at times by mechanical devices. What cannot be thus explained is attributed to hallucinations and to coincidence. This explanation is stubbornly held by some persons at the present time. But wise and honest investigation seems to have shown that such an explanation does not cover all the facts though it *does cover a great number of them,* perhaps the majority of them.

Some explain all by fraud

Others by natural though unknown forces

The second explanation accounts for them all in terms of hypnotism or mesmerism together with what we said just now about subconscious thought and telepathy. In other words they account for everything by purely natural forces which, however, lie beyond the border-land of accurate science.

Others by the agency of the devil

This seems a very fair explanation * and a very much better one than to explain, as others do, everything that happens in Spiritistic meetings by the direct interposition of the devil.

Spiritists are not all evil persons

For by no means the majority of the persons who practise Spiritism or even adhere to its tenets are evil people. Many of them are conscientious, though too often, simple persons who have not the slightest intention of dealing with the powers of darkness. Then proper moral advice is often given

the air the figure of an Arab. Then, on the soldier's saying "good day" in Arabic, the figure corrected him. He had used the wrong word. Presently the figure faded away.

* The explanation of the singing and of levitation by natural, though unknown, forces is borne out by the information which I have received from reliable sources that the voices are made much plainer by the use of a *telephonic machine* and that certain kinds of metals cannot be levitated even by the best mediums.

by the mediums and wholesome truths are uttered by the invisible voices. I have been reliably informed that the Our Father is often recited by them.

But if this is so, why is Spiritism a dangerous or *impious* practice?

It is so first on exactly the same ground on which hypnotism and the Ouija board are dangerous. It is harmful to both bodily and mental health. It is a widely known fact that very many of the mediums develop acute insanity if they persist in their profession for many years. Also persons have been known to develop into mediums in spite of themselves.

Spiritism immoral on health grounds

If this were the only grounds for objection, then the morality of Spiritism would be exactly the same as that of hypnotism. Both could be allowed, with the same safeguards, for the purpose of scientific experiment or for some other lawful purpose. But, as a matter of fact, this is not so. The Church which permits hypnotism utterly forbids any dealing whatever with Spiritism, either for investigation or for any other end. Why is this?

Also against the worship of God

The answer comes from the examination of that which, as we said above, must be examined in Spiritism after we have examined the methods and effects of Spiritists, namely, it is on account of the *intention* which the practitioners of Spiritism have. They intend to call up the spirits of the dead. This is enough to make their practices dangerous not only to health of mind and body but dangerous also to the worship of God.

The intention of Spiritists

For God has a definite plan and a definite discipline with regard to death. He has drawn a curtain between this world and the next which we must not seek to pass except in one way and that is in the way of prayers sent up to Him. These prayers may either be directed to Him that He may extend His love and His mercy to the spirits of the departed or the prayers may be directed to the spirits themselves asking them to intercede with God for us. In either case the prayers find their way to God. There would be nothing unlawful

Against the plan of God

We reach the dead by prayers

in asking God to grant us a vision of some departed spirit; though, in such a request we should make the provision that He sees fit or that it be for our good, and then we should hold ourselves ready to believe that it is out of His wisdom that the request is refused.

Spiritists would use physical means

The Spiritists, on the contrary, wish to communicate with the dead in somewhat the same way as we communicate by radio, or by telepathy, if such a thing is possible, with those living at a distance on this earth. This is what makes their practices dangerous to the worship of God. They act against, at least as far as their intention goes, His plan with regard to the dead. Therefore, if someone makes this supposition: suppose I could make some kind of a scientific instrument which was capable of "listening in" on the life of the next world, would such a machine be unlawful? The answer is, it would be unlawful in the face of the positive plan of God as interpreted by the revelation which His Church keeps.

Deuteronomy

There is a clear passage from Scripture which teaches this, "Neither let there be found among you . . . any one that seeketh the truth from the dead" (Deut. XVIII, 10, 11).

Answer of the Holy Office

Then we have an answer from the Congregation of the Holy Office which was personally approved by His Holiness, Benedict XV. The question was asked, "Whether it is allowed to be present at Spiritistic utterances or manifestations of any kind whatever, whether use is made of a medium or not and whether or not use is made of hypnotism, even supposing that the said manifestations present all the appearances of honesty and respect for religion, and supposing that (the person inquiring) in the first case asks questions of the souls or spirits, in the second case listens to their answers, in the third case only looks on, always providing that he makes a tacit or an express declaration that he wishes to have no part with evil spirits."

To this the answer came back, "No, as to every detail given" (Acta S. Sedis, 9,268; 30,701).

There are two further questions to be dealt with in this

matter. First, do the Spiritists really call up the souls of the departed? Second, is there sure proof of the agency of the devil in the phenomena of Spiritism?

Do the Spiritists really call back the souls of the dead?

As to the first question, if we answered yes, it could not but make us sad. For it would mean that the Church, for however good a reason, was taking from us the chance of having a word with or hearing a word from those who have gone before us and whom we miss so tenderly. But the answer is emphatically "No." There are few things more evident than that the Spiritists, whatever strange forces they may control, never, under any circumstances or upon any occasion whatever call back a departed soul. All the reports from so-called "returned" spirits confirm this so abundantly that it is astonishing that a single sensible person remains unconvinced.

Examples of plain deceptions

I remember a lady whom I knew very well who dealt occasionally in Spiritistic matters and went sometimes to seances. She was not a Catholic. Her mother, whose constant companion she had been for years, died. She went to a medium and was plainly shown what appeared to be the ghost of her mother. But when she questioned the apparition and asked for some message the only answer was, "Get a grey dress." So the ghost of Shakespeare has been reported to have appeared but has uttered nothing else than nonsense, nothing to bind up with the thoughts which he left us; Sir Isaac Newton's ghost has whistled some silly tune and the ghost of George Washington has been guilty of the like inanity. Never has there come back a single contribution to science and literature or theology from souls who wrote so distinguished a record while on this earth. There seems to be no doubt that the phenomena of Spiritism are mixed, at least, with some highly interesting reactions of the human mind and the human body. If these same Spiritists would only give up the idea of invoking the dead, they might contribute something to science and would cease to be the dupes

of their own delusions and to make dupes of other persons who are too often innocent and well-intentioned.

Presence of the devil in seances is not sure

Now as to the presence of the devil or of the other bad angels in the Spiritistic phenomena or at their seances. On this we must say at once that there is nothing certainly established. We have the express teaching of the Church that the bad angels can and do tempt mankind constantly. We have also the explicit revelation of instances in which the bad angels have exercised an influence on material nature, but we cannot say how far this action is a part of their natural powers. We can also say as we did of hypnotism that when people risk the health of mind and body and when they wilfully suspend the freedom of their wills and yield themselves up to unknown forces, they most certainly render themselves helpless to the attacks of their enemies in the other world. Then, again, there is the impiety, whether it is wilful or not, of seeking to penetrate the veil of death, beyond which we can see, by God's plan, only with the eye of faith —"the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not."

Such practices are under suspicion

In closing the subject we might remark that it is hard to understand the unrelenting horror of the Church for Spiritism in any shape or form, or any contact with it whatever, unless that she feels instinctively the presence there of the father of lies and his minions. This instinct in the Church is worthy of the most reverent attention, not only on account of the Church's sacred character as the keeper of revelation, but also on account of her experience with the souls of men extending over so many centuries.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why is hypnotism dangerous to health and morality?
2. Why is Black Magic a sin?
3. What natural forces are in the Ouija board?
4. Why is it wrong to seek to know the future?

5. How can the devil predict the future even when it depends on the free will of man?
6. What are "disproportionate means"?
7. How could we be guilty of superstition with regard to medals of Christ and the saints?
8. Why is Spiritism an "impious practice" even if it contains no dealings with the devil?
9. Prove that the souls of the dead are never called back by the Spiritists.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PARTICULAR AND GENERAL JUDGMENTS

Life a state of trial

One of the fundamental doctrines of the Church is, as we have seen, that this life is a state of trial which ends with this life and then the state of term begins. Between the end of the first state and the beginning of the other comes the Judgment which means nothing else than the passing of sentence by God upon each being according to his or her deserts.

No discussion in the Judgment of God

In the passing of a sentence by an earthly judge there must first be the fair discussion of the case on which the sentence is to be passed. This is, clearly, not necessary when God is the Judge since He knows without examination or witnesses all that should be known. There is no argument, then, by our guardian angel on the one side and the devil on the other. Such scenes are only drawn by pious writers in order to emphasize the justice of the Judge and the thoroughness of the examination.

Christ the Judge

The Scripture plainly teaches that Christ will be the Judge since it is He Who "was appointed by God to be the judge of the living and of the dead" (Acts X, 42). The more common teaching is that the person judged will not see Christ at the instant of the judgment but will know His sentence by illumination of the mind. It is held, too, that Christ will not leave heaven to do the judging but will communicate the sentence from where He is.

What we wish to establish is that the soul of everyone will be judged and sentenced immediately after death and that the sentence will be carried out without delay.

The Council of Florence teaches this as follows:

"And so if persons duly penitent die in the charity of God (i.e., in sanctifying grace) before they have satisfied by

due works of penance for their sins and omissions, their souls are purified after death by the fires of purgatory . . . and the souls of those who have incurred no stain of sin after their Baptism, and those souls, too, who though stained have been duly purged either with their bodies or after separation from their bodies as was mentioned above, are straightway received into heaven and clearly behold God Himself in three divine Persons. . . . And then the souls of those who die in actual mortal sin . . . straightway go down into hell."

Florence

This declaration, which is only one of many of the same kind, does not say anything about the Judgment. That is because it is not necessary. The soul is said to go "straightway" to a place of reward, of purgation or of punishment. But the soul could not or would not so depart unless it received its sentence, and its sentence presupposes its judgment.

Sentence implies judgment

The same doctrine is plainly taught in the parable of Our Lord about Dives and Lazarus in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of Saint Luke. It is there told of the rich man and the beggar, respectively, that when they died one was carried to torment, the other to Abraham's bosom. There was no long interval of time between death and the sentence; for the condemned man speaks of his brothers who are still living on the earth.

Dives and Lazarus

All the Fathers of the Church held that the state of trial for man ends with this life, that the time for merit is done and that as a man dies a friend or an enemy of God so he remains for eternity. It is hard to see how a man could pass out of the body and find himself in the next world and not come to a knowledge of what his state is. For the next world is one of clear seeing. If a man sees that he is God's friend or His enemy he is practically judged by his own conscience.

Man knows his fate at once after death

Some of the early Fathers held that the execution of God's sentence was delayed until the time of the General Judgment. There were also theologians in the early part of the fourteenth century who held that the just had to wait for the Last Judgment before receiving the complete sight of God. But

Discarded opinions

all these opinions were put to rest by the plain teaching of the Council of Florence. The majority of the Fathers are plain about the Particular Judgment as:

Fathers

St. Ephraem the Syrian: "Blessed is the man who is filled with confidence at the hour of his death when his soul is separated from his body. The angels will come to take the soul and will lead it before the tribunal of the eternal and terrible Judge. Mighty is the fear, my brothers, in that hour of death and separation of soul from body. For at that time all the soul's deeds will be present to it, the good and the evil that it has done by day and by night. The soul of a saint which is separated from the body does not fear but rather, full of confidence, rushes joyfully to God surrounded by the ministering angels" (De Beatitud. Animae, c. 1).

And Saint John Chrysostom: "All souls when they depart hence, will be led to that terrible tribunal" (Hom. 14 in Mt., n. 4).

St. Jerome: "Understand that the day of the Lord is the day of the judgment or the day of the going out of each and every one from his body" (In Joel, 2, 1).

St. Augustine: "Who is so obstinate as to deafen the ears of his mind against the Gospel so as not to learn these truths (i.e., that the soul is judged immediately after death) and, learning, to believe them in the person of that beggar who was carried into the bosom of Abraham after his death and in the person of that rich man whose torments in hell are plainly described?" (De Anima, L. 2, c. 4., n. 8).

General Judgment

In the plan of God there is still another Judgment besides the Particular Judgment. We refer to the Judgment which will take place at the end of the world when all created beings with understanding and free will, both men and angels, will be gathered round the throne of Christ the Judge.

We know this by the very plainest revelation. Our Creed says of Christ Our Lord that He "sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." And the Fourth Lateran

Council says, "He (Christ) is to come at the end of the world to judge the living and the dead, and to render to each and all according to their works, to the wicked and to the good in the same manner."

In the Holy Scripture the same doctrine is revealed and in the very same words. In the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel is found the description of the Judgment as well as the message of the Judge. And the same Gospel says in another place, "But I (Christ) say to you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment" (Matt. XII, 36). And the Book of Ecclesiastes says, "And all things that are done God will bring into judgment for every error, whether it be good or evil" (Eccles. XII, 14).

Scripture

The testimony of the Fathers could not but be universal in the face of such plain Scripture. St. Augustine says that "there will be a last judgment by Jesus Christ and of just such a kind as is foretold in Holy Writ, no one denies or doubts unless it be one who, from some malice or blindness, withholds belief from the Scriptures themselves" (De Civ. Dei, L. 20, c. 30, n. 5).

Fathers

The fact of the Judgment being established beyond any question, there come up for consideration many questions which cannot be sufficiently answered, touching as they do on matters full of uncertainty as well as mystery.

First, as to the reason for the Judgment; it is impossible to give a complete reason for the Last Judgment but it is plainly unnecessary so to do. It is enough to say that it is the plan of God. The purpose of God in the Judgment is not merely to manifest His love and justice to each man in His dealings with each man, but to manifest to each man His love and justice in dealing with *all* men. There are many ways in which this might be done. He has chosen one way, the way of the General Judgment.

Reason for the Last Judgment

In this Judgment His dealings with each soul will be manifest, so that each soul will take into eternity with it,

The wisdom of God's plan will be manifest

whether it be lost or saved, the manifestation of the perfection of God's plan for all the life of the world from the beginning. Men will no longer be asked to believe that what God did was for the best. They will *see* that what He did was for the best and they will never forget.

How can we take in such a long story?

This much is clear but the manner in which it will be accomplished is far from clear. How can God make me see, not only within a short time, but even within a measurable space of time, the story of the whole world? This is not possible to answer except by saying that our thinking faculties will have far greater scope and endurance than they have now, united to perishable bodies. There is no doubt of the presence of our bodies as well as our souls at the Last Judgment. The Athanasian Creed says, "At whose (i.e., Christ's) coming all men have to rise with their bodies and give an account of all their own deeds." But the risen body will be a very different thing from the body which we now carry. Whether it is to exist for eternity in joy or in bliss it is certainly to live forever and therefore it will possess the qualities of an everlasting body. We cannot therefore gage its capabilities nor the capabilities of the soul united with it from their capabilities as they now are. What would take us years to realize now, we shall be able to realize then in an instant.

The risen body will be changed

Will angels and men be judged?

Who will be judged? Primarily, all men. The angels can be said to be the secondary objects of the Judgment, since the good angels will be ordered to share the reward of the just and the bad angels to share the punishment of the damned. But it is the deeds of men, not of angels, that will form the proper object of the Judgment. The question is also raised as to whether those who have died without sin but without Baptism will also be present at the Judgment. As we shall see, they will spend their eternity neither in heaven nor in hell. There is little doubt that they will be present; for the purpose of the Judgment applies equally to them,

The unbaptized?

that is, to manifest the plan of God to men.* These will not, of course, present any sins to be judged or any good deeds to be rewarded.

What about the place of the Judgment? There is no certain revelation on this point but there is an ancient pious tradition that has found favor with the Fathers of the Church, that the Judgment will take place in the Valley of Josaphat, which lies between the old wall of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. The likelihood of this place is deduced by some writers from the words of the Prophet Joel, "I (God) will gather together all nations and will bring them together to the valley of Josaphat" (Joel, III, 2). This text has only a probable reference to the Last Judgment. A much higher probability for this same place is deduced from the fact that it is the scene of Our Lord's Passion. It would make His warning to the Chief Priests more meaningful if He is to appear there as judge where He once stood meekly to be judged.

Place of the Last Judgment

The objection can of course be raised that it will need a huge space to accommodate all the men of the earth from the beginning of time. But again we forget that men will have the bodies that are to live forever. Such eternal bodies will not be subject to the same laws as bodies that die. It is more than likely that these immortal bodies will not need earth to stand on, that the air will afford them plenty of support. Hence they could be arranged tier above tier, higher than our highest monuments, all looking towards the Judge. The only picture like it that we have is what we read of gorges or ravines in the East where great numbers of vultures are hovering about dead bodies. Travellers describe how they rise in swarm above swarm, either hanging on the air or blackening the crags and the slopes of the hill, thousands on thousands of them. Their keen eyes see nothing

Room for all men to gather

"There shall the eagles be gathered"

* There is a passage in the Gospel which seems to say that the Apostles will be excluded from the Judgment since He says that they will sit on thrones and do the judging. (Matth. XIX, 28). But this only means that the Apostles together with all the faithful will share the dignity of Christ. To pass sentence belongs to Him alone.

else but the carrion that lies down below. Our Lord used this comparison, so well known to His hearers, when He was speaking of the Last Judgment. What He said was, "Where the body is there shall the eagles (vultures) be gathered together" (Matt. XXIV, 28).

There is another question in connection with the General Judgment which has been the subject of much controversy. It is the question whether those who are living at the time of this Judgment will die. The doubt in this matter arises from some words in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, XV, 51. Many interpret his words as meaning that the just who are living at the Last Judgment will not die but will pass into life everlasting.

Will all men die?

This question must remain an open one and, hence, it can be freely taught that some human beings will never die. Two things should, however, be noted. First, that in many places in revelation there is reference to death as the universal lot of man—as, for instance, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, "It is appointed to men once to die" (Heb. IX, 27). Second, Christ Himself sanctified death by suffering it Himself. It would seem strange that any human being should be excepted from the law to which He freely bowed. His own Mother was certainly no exception to this law of death. She died, though there is the strongest tradition, coming close to revelation, that her body was soon after restored to life and made glorious and immortal with her soul. St. Thomas Aquinas says, "The opinion is a more probable and a more proper one which holds that all those who are found (living) at the coming of the Lord will die and after a short time will rise again" (I, II, 81, a. 3. ad 1).

Death seems to be the universal sentence of mankind

Last of all it must be noted that whether all will die or not in the commonly accepted sense of the separation of the soul from the body, it is certain that all will equivalently die. For at the Last Judgment the body will cease to live the life which it now lives, i.e., digestion, the circulation of the blood, etc., and will take on the qualities of immortality.

All must equivalently die

Another question that is undecided is whether the sins of those who are saved will be manifested to all at the Last Judgment together with sins of those who are condemned. Both the affirmative and the negative answers have supporters. We cannot decide with certainty, but it is certain that if the sins of the just are manifested, as the sins of St. Peter and of St. Mary Magdalen *have* been manifested, though they are now in heaven, they will be manifested for the glory of those who once were sinners. They will be like the troops of enemies that were made to pass before some conquering hero to show what his valor had accomplished. In this case the glory will belong first to God's grace and secondly to the co-operation of the creature.

Will the sins of the just be manifested?

If so, for their glory

The time of the General Judgment is not revealed. It is, moreover, explicitly revealed that no man knows the time. That it is a secret that God has communicated to no one. Some of the early Fathers of the Church seem to have been mistaken on this point and to have thought that the time could be determined from revelation. It is even thought that some of the Apostles were mistaken in their private opinions on this. Such opinions are universally rejected at the present time. It is true that Our Lord speaks of His coming as soon. But this only means that it was soon in comparison with the eternity out of which He would come to judge the world. It is soon for us in the same sense. For when we pass into our eternity, which we soon shall do, the Last Judgment will be, in a true sense, nearer to us than tomorrow is to today. The whole purpose of revelation when it refers to this matter is to make us realize that the things of time will soon pass away and that we should be always ready to give them up.

Time of the Last Judgment is God's secret

Soon, in comparison with eternity

Nothing could be plainer than the text in which Christ speaks of the unknowableness of the time of the General Judgment. "But of that day or hour (He is speaking of the day and hour of the Last Judgment) no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father" (Mark XIII, 32).

Christ had no revelation to give on this point

He means that this is revealed to no one. It is not part of the message which Christ carries, as man, to be revealed to His Church and by her to be kept. Therefore, the Son of God Himself does not know it with communicable knowledge.

How can the same body be restored to me?

There is a scientific fact which seems to offer a difficulty to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. This is the fact that our bodies are constantly changing, putting on new tissue and putting off old tissue, so that in the course of a normally long life, say sixty or seventy years, the total amount of tissue which has been ours would be equal to nine or ten bodies. Besides that, it is at least very likely that the tissue which one body puts off comes, in time, to form part of the tissue of other bodies and then of other and of other. The same thing is true of the body of which I die possessed. It passes into the earth, then into the tissue of plants and finally into other human bodies. How will the souls of men who have been dead for centuries be able to claim the bodies to which they were once united?

Some deny that the risen body will be identical

Some answer this difficulty by saying that the same identical matter which formed our bodies during life is not necessary for the risen body, that the soul will communicate to the body the characteristics which distinguish one individual from another.

Revelation against this

This is not a widely favored opinion, since it goes against the ordinary meaning of the revealed teaching that we shall rise "with the same bodies as those which we now carry." It is not, however, an heretical opinion. The more common opinion is that the soul will be reunited with a *sufficient part* of the bodily matter which it animated during this life. It may be that the providence of God will be required to keep apart a definite portion of each person's bodily substance.

God can exert His special providence

Will the material world be annihilated?

The last question concerning the end of time and the things of time has to do with the fate of the material world, that is to say of the world of air and earth and water and of plants and animals. Will this world be annihilated?

There are two reasons for the existence of the material

world, the world that is inferior to man. The first is to minister to the life of man on earth so that he may eat and drink and breathe, etc. This reason will, clearly, no longer exist when man has put on immortality. An immortal body will need no nourishment nor any aid to its life from without.

There will still remain a reason for its existence

But there is a second reason for the existence of the material world and that is to manifest the perfection of God to man. This is accomplished ultimately through man's mind but it reaches his mind through his bodily senses and since it is sure that he will retain his bodily senses in his immortal body there is a good reason for the material world's continuing in existence in order to manifest God to those same senses and thus make their joy complete. The beauty of the material world would be far greater than it is now for we are now distracted by our own selfish, sordid aims and the needs of our bodies.

It will increase in loveliness

Then there is a particular reason for the continuance of this world in existence since it is the place in which man will have won an eternal victory and, above all, a place inexpressibly sanctified by the presence of Christ and His life in it.

Christ lived here

Hence, though there is not sure revelation in the matter, the Fathers and theologians see an indication of this fact in certain texts of Scripture. They look for a purification of the material world at the end of time, which means that the world, like the body of man, will put on the qualities of immortality. What these qualities will be it is useless to conjecture.

St. Peter in his Epistle says, "But we look for new heavens and a new earth according to his promises in which justice prevaileth" (II Pet. III, 13). And St. John in the Apocalypse: "And he that sat on the throne said: Behold I make all things new" (Apoc. XXI, 5). And St. Paul: "The creature (by this they understand the material world) also itself shall be delivered from the servitude of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. VIII, 21).

Scripture seems to favor the perpetuation of the material world

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why will there be no discussion at the Particular Judgment?
2. Prove that there will be no delay in the carrying out of God's sentence after death.
3. What is one reason for the General Judgment?
4. How shall we be able to hear the story of all time?
5. How will there be room for all the human race?
6. What picture did Christ give us of the Judgment?
7. What is the probability that some men will never die?
8. Why is it that all will at least equivalently die?
9. Prove that no man nor the Church herself knows the time of the Last Judgment.
10. What is the scientific difficulty against the resurrection and how is it answered?

CHAPTER XXIII

HELL

Hell is the place and the state where those who die deliberately turned away from God, and therefore His enemies by choice, will live in eternal separation from Him and also be delivered over to torments without end. **What is hell?**

The revelation of the existence of hell is as clear as the clearest things in revelation.

The Second Council of Lyons teaches that "the souls of those who die in mortal sin straightway go down into hell" (D. 464), and Pope Benedict XII declares, "We moreover define that according to the universal ordination of God the souls of those who pass out of life in actual mortal sin go down immediately after their death into hell where they are tormented by infernal pains" (D. 531). **Nothing clearer in revelation than hell**

The Scripture is terribly plain on the same matter. Our Lord says that He the Judge will say to the wicked, "Depart from me ye accursed into everlasting fire" (Matt. XXV, 41), and at the end of the same chapter He says of the just and the wicked, "And these (the wicked) shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting." He uses precisely the same word "everlasting" to express the life of the blessed and the punishment of the damned. Those who would dispute its literal meaning with regard to one should be ready to do the same with regard to the other. Who would question that the life of the blessed will go on without end? **Scripture** **Everlasting life** **Everlasting fire**

There are very many other texts of Scripture equally plain and the testimony of the Fathers is without a single dissenting voice. St. Augustine says "To be gone from the kingdom of God, to be an exile from God's city, to be cut off from the divine life, to be without the manifold sweetness of God . . . **St. Augustine**

is so mighty a punishment that no torments that we know can be compared with it . . ." (Enchir, c. 112).

Three elements in the doctrine of hell

We should note that there are three parts to the revealed doctrine of hell: first, that the damned are deprived of the sight of God, second, that they are subjected besides to an instrument of punishment called "fire" and third, that this privation of God and this punishment will go on without end. The Church has never tolerated the least doubt or dispute on any of these three points.

What is the fire of hell?

There has been some dispute on the meaning of the word "fire." There have been some who held that it was used only in a figurative sense. But this opinion has found no favor whatever with theologians. It would be branded today as a rash opinion. As to the manner in which material fire can affect the angels or the souls of men before the resurrection, that is no more difficult to understand than the union of the soul with the body. But we need not enter into the different theories which endeavor to explain it. There is little doubt that the fire of hell differs considerably from the fire which we know.

How can a merciful God eternally damn the sinner?

The principal difficulty with regard to hell is the popular one. How can God be so cruel as to create a hell? Why does He pursue with His vengeance those who have offended Him? If I could find it in my heart to forgive someone who had offended me, especially if my enemy could do me no further harm, why cannot God forgive the sinner?

Grievous sin

The difficulty in this question comes from not reflecting on the nature of sin, grievous sin. It is true that the presence of moral evil or sin in the world is a mystery. But, given its presence here, which we have dealt with in a previous chapter, the very nature of sin makes it clear that it is not God who refuses to forgive the sinner but it is the sinner who refuses to turn to God. This refusal is the "sin against the Holy Ghost" which Our Lord said, "Shall be forgiven neither in this world nor in the world to come" (Matt. XII, 32).

Consider a single grievous sin. The soul has a choice either

towards God or away from God and it deliberately chooses away from Him. It says, though not in so many words, "I will have none of Thee and Thy heaven." Sometimes the soul repents. In every case, if it does not repent it must resist the pleading of God's grace, the pleading of the Blood of Christ. Consider the case where the soul does not repent but continues stubbornly on its course away from God. Then death comes and the long road of eternity opens and down this road the soul goes by the impulse of its own act away from God forever. Is there the least injustice in this? If you say that the soul does not know what it is doing, then you are asserting that the soul has *not* committed a grievous sin, has not placed an act capable of separating it from God forever.

The soul chooses away from God

Chooses for eternity

Deliberate choice

When we consider the condemnation of the sinner we are liable to fall into an erroneous view. We picture the sinner coming up towards God and His offended anger driving it away, "Depart from me, you accursed." This is not the whole truth. The soul is first turned away from God solely by its own act. No action of God's either in this world or through all eternity turns the soul away from Him or helps it to remain turned away from Him. He only confirms the sentence of the soul against itself. "Continue," He says, "on the way you have chosen." He only echoes the soul's own choice.

Turns away in spite of God

"Well," you may say, "I see that there is no injustice on the part of God. But what about His mercy? Why should He follow after the soul with punishment? Why does He not leave the soul alone with the punishment of living through eternity without Him, which the soul has freely chosen?"

Before answering this we should consider the truth that is so difficult for us to realize in this life, namely that the loss of God is a pain for the damned soul immeasurably greater than any pain of fire or anything else. If God were to put out the fires of hell, every one of them, then would not be a

Loss of God the greatest pain

The extinguishing of the fires would be only a slight abatement

lessening of the soul's agony worth the consideration. There would still remain that terrible hunger for God which is the expression of the soul's entire nature, and which is all the more terrible because it comes from the action of the soul which the soul cannot reverse. The state of trial and of repentance is done and the state of term is fixed forever.

Must be positive punishment

But there is a certain necessity of positive pains in hell over and above the loss of God. In the first place the soul by its choice away from God is by its nature opposed to God, as we said of the bad angels. Hence, there is a necessity that the power of God should restrain the soul. It is not as if the soul could injure God in His omnipotence; but the very opposition of the soul to God makes God opposed to the soul and therefore His power constrains it. This constraint results in the imprisonment of Hell.

The imprisonment of hell

In addition to this, the soul has not only turned away from God; it has also broken His law to a greater, or a less degree and therefore must be subjected to punishment according to the degree of its guilt. But in the very punishment of the damned God shows His mercy. This He does in two ways.

Mercy to the damned

There was an opinion among some of the early Fathers and theologians of the Church that on the occasion of great feast days such as Easter, for instance, there was a lessening of the pains of hell for a time. This opinion is rejected by the majority of theologians at the present day. If this opinion taught that there was a progressive lessening of the pains of hell so that the damned would reach after a time a state of contentment with their lot, it is a heretical opinion and in this form has been expressly condemned by the Church. If, on the other hand, it merely means a temporary relaxation of the pains of hell, it is of very little importance except to emphasize the truth that God is merciful even towards the damned in hell.

Abandoned opinion

Progressive lessening is a heresy

Punishment of hell less than deserved

But the two ways which no one disputes in which God is merciful towards the damned are, first, that He punishes them less than they deserve, and second, that He allows them to sin no more and to incur no further guilt.

No increase in the guilt of the damned

Sometimes we find things in writings on hell or hear things in sermons on the same subject which go against these two truths. We have pictured for us the souls of the damned beating themselves against the bars of hell, shrieking blasphemies against the face of God and, it would seem, ever committing new sins and incurring new guilt and, by a natural consequence, renewed punishment.

This is not accurate theology. But the particularly bad part of it is that it might give us the idea of God's allowing the souls to plunge themselves deeper and deeper into guilt while He heaps on the punishment ever more and more. The accurate truth is that the degree of guilt is fixed for the soul and by the soul when the state of trial is done, when life ends. And the degree of punishment is also fixed, which can never be increased and which is less than God could in justice impose.

Reason for emphasizing the extra pains of hell

But there is a very good reason for preachers and writers emphasizing and even dwelling exclusively on the pains of the damned in hell. If men were told that by far the greatest pain in hell is the loss of God, to which pain the extra suffering is incomparable, this teaching, true though it is, would rob hell of its horror. There would be little terror for a great number of men in the thought of spending eternity without God. "We can get along in this life without Him," they would say, "why not in the next life, too?" It is far better to exaggerate the severity of the flames of hell than to underestimate the pain of the loss of God. It is strictly God's truth that any pain on earth or any multiplication of earthly pains would be embraced a thousand times rather than eternal separation from God, if we could see it as it is.

The loss of God would fail to terrify many

Where is hell?

The location of hell is not a matter of revelation but there is an ancient and common opinion which holds that hell is somewhere near the centre of this earth. This cannot, however, be proved from those passages in Scripture which give an account of persons sinking down into hell through the earth yawning open to receive them (Numb. XVI, 32). Such

an account may only express the separation of the damned from the brightness of the sky which we associate with heaven and the presence of God. In modern times, when the nature of the earth has been more fully studied, this opinion about the location of hell has been the object of much ridicule. But science has discovered nothing against such a possibility. There is a certain fitness in the imprisonment of the damned within the earth which has been the scene of their deliberate rejection of God.

Probably under the earth

With the consideration of hell comes the consideration of that other place or state to which those are committed who die without sanctifying grace, but without being guilty of any grievous sin, or, indeed, any sin at all against God. The majority of such persons are infants who have died after the time of Christ without Baptism, or without the equivalent of Baptism in the time before the coming of Christ.

The limbo of the sinless but unbaptized

The language of the Fathers of the Church is sometimes hard to understand with regard to these. They speak of them as the "damned" and the place where they are as hell. We must understand these utterances in the light of what we have said concerning original sin. These infants are damned inasmuch as they undergo the sentence passed upon the nature of Adam on account of his sin. But their state has nothing in common with that of those who die guilty of personal sin. They are guilty, as we saw, of original sin, but they are guilty of no personal turning from God. They will not, therefore, see God face to face. That is a privilege to which their nature has no claim and which was forfeited for their nature by the sin of the representative of their nature. But with all the nature they have they will turn towards God both to know Him and to love Him. They are in the state of term, which means that they can never turn from their last end. They have, also, all the happiness of which their nature is capable. This happiness includes the satisfaction of the senses. There is one opinion that after the general resurrection these human beings with their restored bodies will inhabit this earth. There is nothing against

Are these in any sense damned?

They are happy to the fullness of their capacity

May meet the blessed

revelation that the blessed who see God will have free intercourse with these. They may even delight them with their accounts of the vision of God which vision is beyond the capacity of the nature of the unbaptized; still their nature can enjoy an account of it from others.

Joined with the infants who have died without Baptism or its equivalent will be those persons who, having come to the use of reason, whether they are baptized or not, have never made an act of faith and yet have never committed a grievous sin. It is not at all certain that there could be such a person. It seems more than likely that everyone who comes to the use of reason will be offered the chance of accepting God's revelation in one form or another. It seems also likely that they will not be able to reject this revelation without a grievous sin. But only in the supposition that such a thing could be, we say that such persons will join the society of the naturally blessed. For it is God's revealed rule that an explicit act of faith is necessary for salvation for all those who have reached the use of reason, that is, that they may attain to the vision of God in the highest heaven. An act of contrition includes, of course, an act of faith.

Those who have never believed

Baptism of desire

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why must one who doubts hell doubt heaven?
2. What are the three elements in the doctrine of hell?
3. Why is eternal separation from God just?
4. Why do popular preachers emphasize the terror of the fire of hell?
5. Why would the extinguishing of the fires of hell make only a slight difference in the suffering there?
6. What is the improbable way and what are the two sure ways in which God shows mercy to the damned?
7. In what sense are those damned who are in the limbo of the unbaptized?
8. What fitness is there for the location of hell under the earth?
9. Why would not the unbaptized suffer from meeting the blessed in the next life?
10. Who else besides the unbaptized will be in the limbo of the unbaptized?

CHAPTER XXIV

PURGATORY

The debt of sin

Purgatory is the place or state in which the souls of those who die in the state of sanctifying grace but with the debt of sin still unpaid, are detained until the same debt is paid in full. We always incur a debt from our sins whether they are mortal or venial. And when we have repented and turned back to God it does not follow that satisfaction has been fully made. And fully made it *must* somehow be.

A reasonable doctrine

The doctrine of the satisfaction for sin is a most reasonable one. If we have deliberately done evil against someone and then regretted it and asked his pardon and obtained it, there will still remain the duty of repairing as far as we can the harm done to the man by us. It is true we cannot harm God in Himself, but we can harm His honor and offend His majesty for which reparation is due. This doctrine will become plainer if we consider the case of a man who leads a long life of sin and then at the last moment aided by the powerful grace of God goes to confession and receives absolution. Such a man should not be admitted into heaven with one who has done years of penance for his sins. There is, of course, the special case of one who makes a perfect act of love of the sublimity of that made by Mary Magdalen. This clears away at once all guilt and makes full satisfaction. But acts of love like this are the exception, not the rule.

A sublime act of love pays all debts

Guilt of all sins must be removed before we enter upon the next life

The guilt of all sins, both mortal and venial, must be removed either in this life or on the threshold of the next life as happens, according to the best theologians, with venial sins which are forgotten or unremitted until the end of life.

But the last reason for our knowledge of the existence of purgatory is the exact revelation of God in the matter. There

are two things to be established, first that purgatory, according to our definition, exists, second, that the souls there detained can be helped by the prayers of the faithful on earth. **Two elements in the doctrine of purgatory**

The Council of Florence teaches "if persons duly penitent die in the charity of God, before they have satisfied by due works of penance for their sins and omissions, their souls are purified after death by the fires of purgatory: and unto the relief of such pains there avail the prayers of the faithful on earth, that is to say the sacrifices of the Mass, supplications and alms and other offices of piety which the faithful have been accustomed to offer for each other according to the established customs of the Church" (D. 693). This is only one of the very many utterances in which the Church proclaims one of the best known of all her doctrines. **Florence**

The Scripture never mentions the word purgatory but we can gather the doctrine from different passages. The New Testament seems, unquestionably, lacking in clear references to the state of those who are temporarily detained after death. This only proves that the New Testament is incomplete with regard to the message of Christ. St. Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians speaks of the imperfect lives which so many of the faithful lead, building, as he says, structures of "wood, hay and stubble," which means filled with small sins and vanities. Then he adds, "If any man's work burn he shall suffer loss; yet he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (I Cor. III, 15). Here there is, according to the interpreters of Scripture, a distinct reference to purgatory in which the punitive fires accomplish the salvation of those who die with the remains of their sins still upon them. **New Testament**

There is also the text of the Gospel of St. Matthew which says that the sin against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven "neither in this world nor in the world to come" (Matt. XII, 32). The sin against the Holy Ghost is the stubborn refusal of the sinner to repent, with which sin there can be no forgiveness from God. But the text clearly implies that other sins will be forgiven both in this world and in the world to **One sin not forgiven in the world to come**

come. This is St. Augustine's remark on this passage. In the same Gospel there is mention of the avoidance of strife with our fellow man "in the way," that is, during this life, and the caution from Our Lord that we may be cast into prison for such offences, though they are evidently of a minor nature. Then Our Lord adds with great solemnity, "Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing" (Matt. V, 26). This expresses the law of God by which we must satisfy for our sins in full. And the satisfaction is evidently not always made in this life.

There are a number of texts in the Old Testament which are quoted which are considered to refer, though not with perfect clearness, to the existence of purgatory. But the classical text, part of which is a part of the Church's liturgy for the dead, is taken from the Second Book of Machabees:

Machabees

"And making a gathering, he (Judas Machabeus) sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection.

"(For if he had not hoped that they who were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead).

"And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them.

"It is therefore a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins." (II Mach. XII, 43, 44, 45, 46).

The force of the passage is found in the fourth verse. The passage shows that in those times it was a received custom among the Jews to pray for the dead. But this would not prove that the custom was founded on truth unless we had the explicit praise of this act. Having this in an inspired book we have the declaration of God's approval Who is the author of the book.

Machabeus' action approved by God

The Fathers are universal in their testimony to the existence of purgatory and the doctrine that the souls there can

Fathers

be helped by the prayers of the faithful. Saint Augustine speaks of the prayers of the Church "which are poured forth to the Lord God at His altar, in which (prayers) the commemoration of the dead has its place" (Cura pro Mortuis, n. 3). St. Chrysostom says that the Apostles ordered a commemoration of the dead in the Sacred Mysteries, "for they know that they (i.e., the dead) receive much aid from that and large benefit" (In epist. ad Phil., hom. 3, n. 4). St. Isidore: "We believe that to offer sacrifice for the faithful departed and to pray for them has been handed down to us from the Apostles themselves for this (custom) is cherished over the whole earth" (De Eccl. Offic., L. 1, c. 18, n. 11).

Liturgies of the early Church

In the earliest liturgies of the Church we find always prayers for the dead of the following kind: "Let us pray for our brethren who have gone to rest in Christ, so that the God of supreme tenderness towards men, Who receives the soul of him who is passed away, may remit unto him every sin and, moved with gentle kindness towards him, may establish him in the land of the living" (Constit. Apost., c. 41).

Inscriptions in the Catacombs

Carved on the walls of the Catacombs from the earliest times we find inscriptions beseeching God for mercy and rest and relief for the dead.

Location of purgatory

The location of purgatory is not revealed. A common opinion places it under the earth. There is also a widely favored opinion that some of the souls are permitted at times to go about over the earth to beseech interest in their exile in the shape of more prayers from their fellow men.

Twofold suffering in purgatory

The suffering of purgatory is twofold, that of temporary privation of the vision of God, and the suffering from some punitive agent commonly called fire. This much is revealed, though the nature of this fire is uncertain. We should carefully contrast the state of these souls with that of the damned in hell. The souls in purgatory are in no way turned from God. They are, on the contrary united with Him by the strongest acts of love. They have not, as we have on this earth, anything to distract them from God. They clearly see

that He is the only end of their being. They are only kept from Him by the debt that remains to be paid.

St. Catherine of Genoa

Saint Catherine of Genoa, whose private revelations on purgatory are famous and fully in accord with the doctrines of the Church, has the following passage:

"It seems to me that no joy can be found to be compared with the joy of a pure soul of purgatory, except the joy of the blessed of paradise . . . On the other hand they suffer a pain so severe that no tongue can describe it nor any mind grasp the slightest concept of it unless God should reveal it by a special grace" (De Purg., c. 2).

The blessed pray for the souls

The souls in purgatory can be helped by the prayers of those outside of purgatory. This is the clear teaching of revelation. The blessed in heaven pray for them as those same blessed constantly pray that the whole Church (militant on earth), suffering (in purgatory), and triumphant (in heaven) will be soon united before God. But at the same time the blessed cannot help the suffering souls in the same way that we can. They cannot *pay their debts for them.*

But cannot help them as we can

The reason of this is that they are in the state of term. The time of merit is passed. All the prayer, then, and exalted praises of God from those who see His face has not the peculiar power of paying the debts contracted on this earth that a little prayer or good work or sacrifice has from one of us who are still on this earth. The great advantage of praying and offering our works for the souls in purgatory is that we accomplish a double effect. We pay their debts and pay our own by the same act. For every act of true charity undoubtedly cuts down the debts that our sins have heaped up against us. It is a sort of usury which God gives to works of love.

Christ has satisfied for our sins

One of the Protestant difficulties against the doctrine of purgatory is that Christ has satisfied in full for our sins and so there is no need whatever in our satisfying for them, nor in a place where this satisfaction is accomplished. Our first answer to this is simply to point to the divine revelation on the subject. But the exact theology on this is worthy of

note. If Christ had not died for us we could neither merit heaven nor pay the debts which stand against our entrance into heaven, no matter how much good we did and how many tears we shed. It is only on account of the infinite satisfaction on the part of Christ that the fires of purgatory are capable of preparing a soul for its entrance into heaven. And so with all the things which we do in payment of our own debts or the debts of others, they are efficacious inasmuch as they *apply* (as theologians say) the satisfaction of Christ. To use a figure from the money world, no good work that we do can buy our entrance into heaven, nor buy anyone else's entrance nor buy us nor anyone else nearer to heaven unless it is stamped, as it were, with the image of Christ. He makes such coin legal tender in the traffic for heaven.

We must apply the satisfaction of Christ

Our works must be stamped with the mark of His Passion

The question is asked whether the souls in purgatory can help us. They certainly can and do think of us, for the bonds of true charity are not severed by death. But can they send us graces and helps through their prayers, can they send us through God warnings out of the wisdom which they now have? Some eminent theologians deny this. They say that while their imprisonment lasts, those souls can help neither themselves nor anyone else. But no one denies that the blessed in heaven can help us. That is part of the dogma of the Communion of Saints. But the souls in purgatory will most certainly stand one day among the saints and who can doubt that their voices will then be raised in supplication for those who have speeded their coming before God? Then there are very eminent theologians who hold that those souls can help us even while they are still in purgatory. This opinion is very much strengthened by the common conviction of the pious faithful who pray for help to the souls in purgatory and often declare that they have received help and guidance from them. The law of praying is the law of believing.

Can the souls help us?

They can help us when they are freed

Probably even before that

The common teaching of the Church is that there will be no more purgatory after the Last Judgment. What then will be done with those souls whom the time of the Judgment finds

Purgatory ceases with time

with debts still to be paid before they can enter heaven? They will have, as many may even now have, their purgatory on this earth. It is not hard to imagine how this will be brought about. For in those terrible days "all the tribes of the earth will mourn" as Our Lord says. The joy will be withdrawn from worldly things, and they will become as dust and ashes. And everyone will be faced with the utter folly of having found delight in a creature away from God, even in the smallest way. This, together with temporal afflictions like pain and sorrow can play the part of the fires of purgatory.

Satisfaction will be made on earth

Notice the difference, in closing, between the devotion to the souls in purgatory and the practice of Spiritism. In the first, taught by God, we lift our prayers to God for the dead that He may have mercy on them. Or we pray to the dead themselves that they may intercede with God for us and send us help with His permission. In the second the natural powers are strained into trances or other unhealthy states; mysterious, unmeaning tremors are awaited; weird sounds and sights are experienced in the midst of gloom. And, in general, effects are produced which have no connection whatever either with the worship of God or the salvation of souls but smack largely of madness or of magic.

Difference between the doctrine of purgatory and Spiritism

TEST QUESTIONS

1. What is the debt of sin?
2. Prove purgatory from the New Testament.
3. Prove the same from the Old Testament.
4. What proof is found in the liturgies of the early Church?
5. How is there at once joy and sorrow in purgatory?
6. How is it that we can help the souls in purgatory in a way that the blessed in heaven cannot help them?
7. What part has the satisfaction of Christ in paying the debts of our sins?
8. Prove that the souls can help us.
9. How will the remnant of mankind at the Last Day pay the debt of their sins?
10. Show the difference between the doctrine of purgatory and Spiritism.

CHAPTER XXV

HEAVEN

Heaven is the state or the place in which those who die in the friendship of God enjoy forever the face-to-face vision of God. The existence of heaven according to this definition is the plainest teaching of the Church. In fact it is like the light held high in the Church's right hand to make bright the page of her teaching. **Meaning of heaven**

Benedict XII has a famous definition of the joy of heaven. "Those," he says, "who after the ascension of Our Savior Jesus Christ into heaven have died or shall have died, have been, are and shall be in heaven, in the kingdom of the heavens, in the celestial paradise with Christ and joined to the company of the holy angels . . . And they see the divine essence with intuitive, even with face-to-face vision, with no creature thrusting itself in between by means of which they might be able to see, but with the divine essence showing itself to them directly, unveiled and clear. And so, after this manner of vision, they enjoy that same divine essence. And moreover it is on account of this very vision and this very enjoyment that the souls of those who have passed from this life are truly happy; and they have rest and life everlasting. . . ." **Benedict XII**

The Scripture is so filled with passages about the joy of the blessed in heaven that it is not easy to select one passage before the other. **Scripture**

"Then shall the king (Christ) say to them that shall be on his right hand; come you blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. XXV, 34). Then we have Our Lord's words in His prayer at the Last Supper just before His Passion, **St. Matthew**

"Father I will that where I am they also whom thou hast given me may be with me; that they may see my glory that thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the creation of the world" (John XVII, 24).

There are also passages in which the nature of the joy of heaven is more expressly signified:

St. Paul

"We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known" (I Cor. XIII, 12). And in the First Epistle

St. John's Epistle

of St. John, "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God: and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear we shall be like to him: because we shall see him as he is" (I John, III, 2).

There is scarcely an end to the eloquence of the Fathers on the joys of heaven; St. Cyprian says, "What will be the

Fathers

glory and how mighty will be the joy to be admitted to the sight of God, to be so honored as to receive the joy of salvation and eternal light together with Christ thy Lord and thy

St. Cyprian

God . . . to rejoice in the gift of immortality together with the just and the friends of God in the kingdom of heaven, to receive there what neither the eye hath seen nor the ear heard nor hath entered into the heart of man" (Epist. 58, n. 10).

St. Augustine

And St. Augustine: "For so is that rightly understood which the Apostle says, 'That God may be all in all'. For He Himself will be the end of all our desires who will be beheld without end, who will be loved without satiety, who will be praised without weariness . . . There we shall have the opportunity and we shall see, we shall see and we shall love, we shall love and we shall praise. Behold what shall in the end be without end" (De Civ. Dei, L. 22, c. 30, nn. 1, 5).

How can we see God?

It is clearly established, then, that the just shall see God and in this consists the main joy of heaven which shall be without end. But there is some theological discussion as to the manner in which we shall see Him. This discussion brings out the truth more forcibly.

It is clear that we shall not see God in the imperfect way

that we see things in this world. In the first place we cannot see more than the surface of things here; we cannot see very deep into anything. But in heaven our sight of God will be clear and piercing. We shall know Him as He is. Then, again, in this life we cannot look for a long time even at the most beautiful object. We have to turn away and rest our eyes. But the eyes of our mind will never need rest from the sight of God. We never want the light of the morning turned off. It refreshes the eyes and gives them the power to see. So will the sight of God do to the mind in heaven.

Not by surface vision

Not intermittently

There is quite a dispute as to how the mind which, with all its wonderful power, is still a limited thing, can take in, as it were, the greatness of God, Who is without limit or infinite. Think of how we know God in this life. We see something beautiful and we argue correctly that God Who made it must be much more beautiful. It is somewhat like passing through a kingdom and seeing more and more of the splendid monuments which some king has built and coming thus to know more and more of his greatness and his power. Yet this comparison is lacking in one important respect; for the king's monuments do not tell us much of the peculiar nature of the king; since they do not reflect his nature they are not made, unless for a statue here and there, after any likeness of the king himself. The contrary is true of the things of creation. They all reflect, though in a very feeble way, the nature of God Who made them. So that the more we know of created things, the more, in a true sense, we know of God.

Not indirectly

Such a knowledge of God will be much more clear as its field widens and as the powers of knowing are increased. This will be the way in which the unbaptized will know God through all eternity and their powers of knowing will, doubtless, be increased. But it is a very different thing to know God face to face. Not only have we no claim to such a vision, but we have no capability for it as we now are. We could stand in His presence, or rather our souls could be

But face to face

admitted to some kind of nearness to Him; but if God did not somehow increase the natural seeing power of the soul, we could not see Him. He might show us some created thing which should *express* His presence, like the burning bush to Moses or the angels in human forms that appeared to Abraham; He might fill our souls with inexpressible joy and exultation in token of His nearness. But this would not be seeing Him. And see Him we certainly shall.

Our minds will have to be elevated

Some theologians hold that God will infuse into the souls of the blessed a permanent quality called "the Light of Glory" by means of which the soul can see God's very substance. Others hold, very beautifully, that God will unite Himself to the soul so that the soul will see Him by the power with which He sees Himself. They do not, however, pretend to say how this is done. In a word the whole thing must remain a mystery of which we must await the solution, holding fast at the same time to the sure fact that we shall see Him face to face as He is.

Knowledge, love and joy

The first effect of the vision of God in heaven is an act of perfect love of God which never passes and never grows less. Then the vision which fills the mind and the love which engages the will, result in perfect joy, which is nothing else than the possession of the Good for which our whole being yearns.

Sin impossible in heaven

There is another effect of the vision and that is that it becomes impossible to sin. The impossibility of sinning for those who are united to God in heaven is admitted and defended by all. It follows from the very nature of sin that where there is perfect joy sin cannot even approach. For grievous sin is the loss of God by the turning away from Him, and even the smallest sin is the slackening, as it were, of the perfect union with Him and the perfect possession of Him. If sin were possible in heaven, then the joy of heaven would not be secure in its eternity. There would be a serious flaw in the happiness which we would be in even the most remote danger of losing. All the clear revelation which we

have of the everlasting joy of heaven is the surest proof at the same time of the impossibility of sin there.

Theologians ask the reason why sin is impossible in heaven and some answer that it is simply from the providence of God Who takes care that there shall be no temptations. But the greater theologians point out that this is not correct, that sin is absolutely impossible in heaven unless God were to deprive the blessed souls of the vision of Himself, in which case heaven would cease to be heaven. For, from the very nature of our will we cannot turn away from an object in which is found our supreme Good. The only reason why sin is possible in this life is because in this life we do not see God as He is. We are deceived by the appearance of good, or, rather, we deceive ourselves. In heaven we cannot help loving God with our whole heart and our whole soul and our whole mind.

Impossible to turn from God

The reward of heaven will differ according to each one's desert. It is clear that those who have suffered and done heroic things for God should find a greater reward than those who, like a baptized child who never comes to the use of reason, have nothing to show, or than such as slipped into God's friendship at the last minute after a life of sin. That which regulates the greatness of the reward is what theologians call the degree of glory. This is nothing else than the capacity which each soul has to take in the vision of God. The capacity of different souls will be different but each soul will be filled with the vision up to the fullness of its capacity. There can be no jealousy or sorrow for one's not being able to see as much of God as another. Each one will be fully satisfied. "And every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor" (I Cor. III, 8).

The reward of heaven will vary

But will fill the capacity of each soul

The central or principal act of the blessed in heaven is the knowledge and the love of God and the joy which goes with this knowledge and love. This act, or collection of acts will never cease for eternity. But these acts do not make up the whole of the life of the blessed in heaven. They will also occupy themselves with created things and, since

Accidental beatitude

joy must fill all their acts, these secondary acts are said to make up what is called "accidental beatitude." The recognition and love of those who are bound to us by ties of friendship or of blood will be part of the joy of heaven. There will also be the pleasure of the pursuit of knowledge and of the sight of objects of created beauty. But all these objects and all these acts will be subordinated to the central object which is the beauty of God and to the central act which is the joy of beholding His beauty.

Knowledge in heaven will begin with God

The process of life in heaven will be precisely the reverse of the process of life on this earth. Here we come to a knowledge of God through a knowledge of creatures and to a love of God through a love of creatures. This is the ordinary process. There we shall come to a knowledge and love of creatures through a knowledge and love of Him Whose glory and goodness we shall see most clearly in creatures. So that our love of creatures will be much more perfect than it is here on earth.

The body will share the joy of the soul

After the Last Judgment the soul will be reunited to the body and the body will share in the happiness of the soul. The body will not only take on the quality of immortality. That is true of the bodies of the damned as well. But the bodies of the blessed will also take on the qualities of glory which will make them glorified bodies. The qualities of a glorified body though full of mystery are, still, the object of explicit revelation. For we have the account of the risen body of Christ according to which model our own bodies will be remade. "Who (Christ) will reform the body of our lowness, made like to the body of his glory" (Phil. III, 21).

The perfection of a glorified body will consist partly in what we might call negative qualities and partly in positive qualities. Negative qualities are those things which the body will be free from. Positive qualities are those things which it will actually have.

First as to the negative qualities: the outstanding negative quality is that the body will no longer be, as it is in this

Positive and negative qualities of a glorified body

life, an impediment to the spirit. Not only will there be no strife between the flesh and the spirit—that is essential to the peace and dignity of the life of glory—but the body will no longer be a drag on the spirit. We cannot think for a long time now without the body growing weary. We cannot concentrate in thought without many distractions from the body. Then all will be changed. The body, while remaining a body, will be a perfect companion for the spirit. In fact the glorified body is called by theologians a spiritual body.

Soul will be independent of the body

Take an example of this. It is according to the union of body and soul that while they are united the soul cannot act without the aid of the body. In the glorified state the souls can act with the aid of the body if it so wishes, but it can also act without the body. It will see the essence of God without any aid from the body and so it will be able to see other lesser things.

No vegetative life of the body

Then the body will have no needs which will lay upon the soul the necessity of supplying them. The vegetative life of the body will have come to an end. There will be no such thing as discarding tissue and gathering new tissue. Fixed in its substance, the body will last unchanging from eternity to eternity.

Joy of the senses

Now as to the positive qualities: the senses will be strengthened to a keenness far beyond their best state now and each sense will be filled with its proper joy; but it will be a joy worthy of a spiritual body. The eye will be filled with the highest splendor and beauty. The glorified faces of Christ and of His Mother will be the noblest objects on which they will look. There will be countless other objects, including the faces of those whom we love. Then there will be nothing lacking in the exquisite hues of landscape and of distance which can comfort the view. So all the other senses will have their perfect satisfaction. There will be music for the ear, savor for the taste, without any reference to nourishment, fragrance for the sense of smell and softness at once and vigor for the touch.

In addition to all this theologians find four positive qualities that will be added to a glorified body.

Four positive qualities

The first is impassibility by which the body will be made incapable of suffering. This will not come from the fact that the health of the body will remain perfect and that God will keep all harm from the body, but from the fact that the body will receive some quality that will so strengthen it that even the assault of harm would be powerless to hurt it.

The second quality is subtlety, by which it will no longer be excluded from the space occupied by other bodies but will be able to pass through them without mutilation of itself. Theologians find an indication of this in the action of the glorified body of Christ when He passed through the stone that closed His tomb at the resurrection and when He entered through closed doors into the upper room where the Apostles were gathered.

Clarity is the next quality by which the glorified body will shine brilliantly. Our Lord's body in His transfiguration was an indication of this when "His face did shine as the sun and His garments became whiter than snow." Then He Himself says in the Gospel, "The just shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. XIII, 43).

Exemplified in the risen body of Christ

The last quality of the glorified body is agility by which it will be able to pass with the speed of thought from one place to another. This mysterious quality is firmly vindicated by theologians. It will secure the body in that negative quality of being no impediment to the spirit, since the spirit will not have to wait, as now, till the body by a slow journey has reached the place of the spirit's desire. The great Suarez even holds as probable opinion that the body will then be able to pass from one distant place to another instantaneously without passing through the spaces that intervene. This is, of course, only an opinion.

Opinion of Suarez

These qualities are summed up in a sentence of St. Paul, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It (i.e., the body

of the just man) is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption.

"It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. St. Paul

"It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body" (I Cor. XV, 42, 43, 44).

The last question in connection with heaven is a hard one and yet it is one that is often raised and it demands an answer. How can we be happy in heaven if we know that those whom we love are in hell separated from us and from God forever? How can our happiness in heaven survive the separation from friends?

The answer to this is not difficult. The difficulty is in realizing the truth of the answer. It should be clear that such will be our union with God in heaven that we shall love all those whom He loves, all those who love Him, and by that same love we shall be withdrawn from all those who by their own free act have withdrawn themselves from God forever. Note well that all those who shall be in hell are turned away from *us* or, just as truly, turned against us by the same eternal act that turns them away from and against God. God, as we have seen, does not pursue those souls with ever-increasing vengeance. On the contrary, He shows mercy towards them by placing a limit to their chastisements and by not allowing them to increase their guilt. We unite with God in these decrees of God's mercy but we also unite with Him in the decree of His justice by which He confirms, as it were, the choice of the soul to have none of Him. Even in this life those who love God are bound to draw away from those who are deliberately opposed to God, no matter how near and dear such persons may be. This is the meaning of those words of Christ which otherwise seem so hard to understand. "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke XIV, 26). This cannot mean that we are bidden to wish evil to anyone. That is a sin in this world and impossible in heaven.

The lost are withdrawn from us by their own act

We shall unite with God's mercy towards them

But not with love

Here on earth we should pine for the salvation of our dear ones

On the other hand this truth that the eternal loss of any soul will not interfere with our happiness in heaven is not a truth to be dwelt on while we are still in this life. Such a practice might make us unconcerned about the fate of others. Nothing is more unlike to Christ than that. It is far better for us to forget this truth and act as if we could never be happy if any single one who is dear to us should not reach heaven with us. Then we shall be unwearied in prayer and the beseeching of God for grace for them. And if we persevere to the end we must win.

The agony of Christ is our model

Part of the agony of Christ in the garden was so terrible that His human nature almost drew back from it; "If it be possible let this chalice pass from me" (Matt. XXVI, 39). This was the part in which He saw souls escaping Him in every age of time. He could have looked ahead, beyond the finish of His Passion when there would be no more agony for Him. He could have consoled Himself with the thought that when He was ascended into heaven His Sacred Heart would have rest from such terrible visions and from struggle so frightful. But He did not do this. He embraced His bitter agony and fought on for those souls. And that agony is powerful to save through all time till the last human being dies. No soul that is near to Christ will seek to escape in this life the anxiety for the salvation of others.

TEST QUESTIONS

1. Show how the sight of God is the greatest happiness of which our nature is capable.
2. Why will our mind have to be elevated for the face-to-face vision of God?
3. How do we see God in this life?
4. Why will sin be impossible in heaven?—two reasons.
5. What is accidental beatitude?
6. What are the negative qualities of a glorified body?
7. What are the four positive qualities of a glorified body?
8. Exemplify some of these in the risen body of Christ.
9. How can we be happy in heaven if our dear ones are lost?
10. What does the agony of Christ teach us?

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